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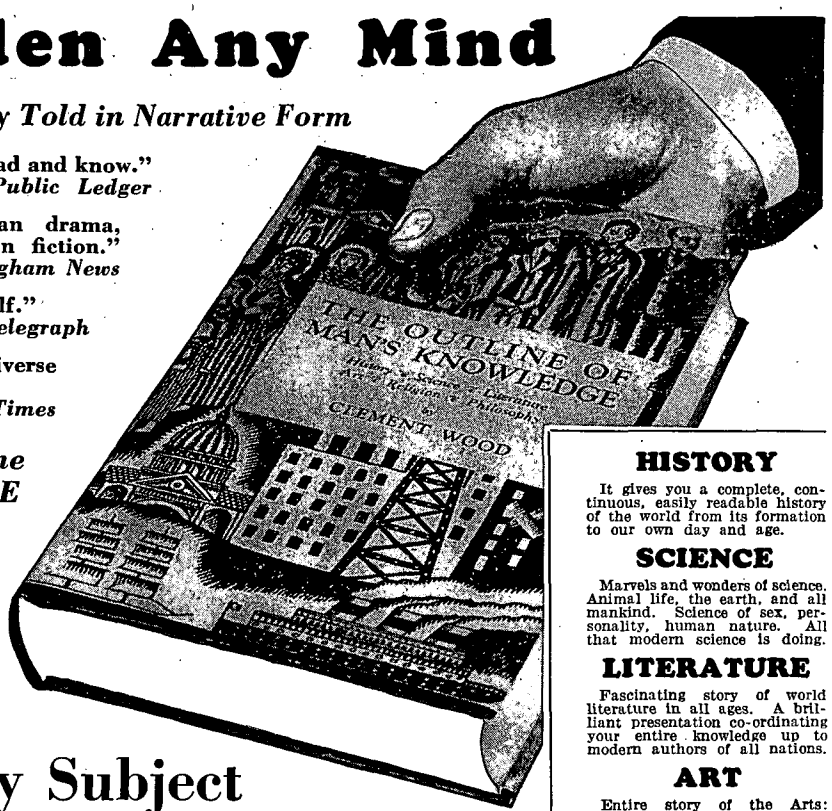

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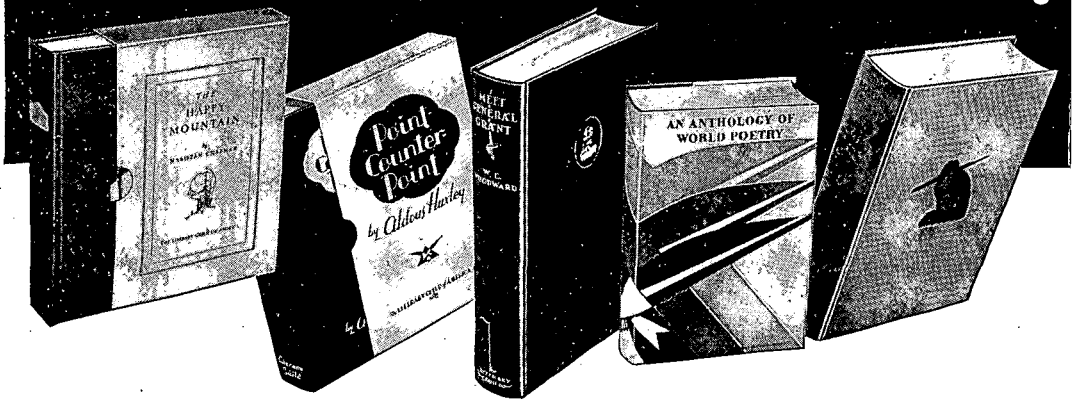

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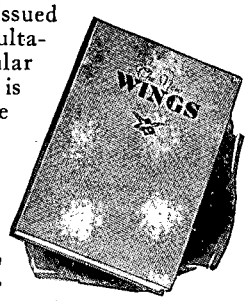

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COLLEY CIBBER was born in 1671 and died in 1757. He was famous as an actor, a theatrical manager, a dramatist, and a poet whom Walpole made Laureate to George II. He deserves his little immortality for having written an *Apology* for his own life, which is one of the earliest and most interesting English autobiographies. But he is chiefly remembered as one of the rash legion who incurred the enmity of Pope. He is preserved forever in the amber of the *Dunciad*. But he was something more than an insect, as Miss Senior's book shows. It is a scholarly work, of more interest to the student than to the general reader.

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES, ECCENTRIC AND POET *by Royall H. Snow* (COVICI-FRIEDE; $3.00)

PROFESSOR SNOW has written an excellent biographical and critical study of that noted and eccentric son of an eccentric and noted father, Thomas Lovell Beddoes. At the age of nineteen, with the publication of *The Bride's Tragedy*, Beddoes had already "captivated the grim critics of *Blackwood's* and *The Edinburgh*". An extraordinary career was prophesied for him. And extraordinary his career was, though in the eyes of the world and even in the eyes of Beddoes himself, that of a wretched failure. "He wrote but one more play, which cost him twenty years of labor, and died, a lonely and cynical rebel, in Basle."

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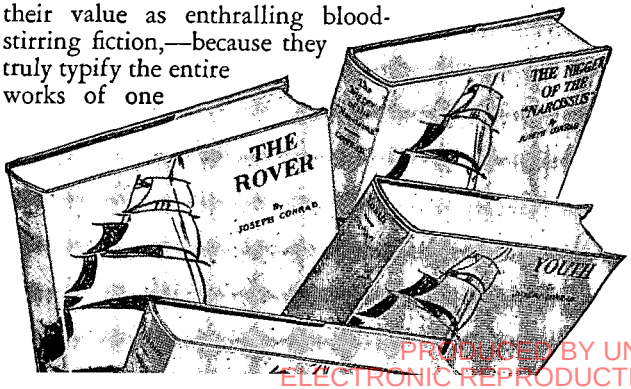

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(CONTINUED ON PAGE XIX)

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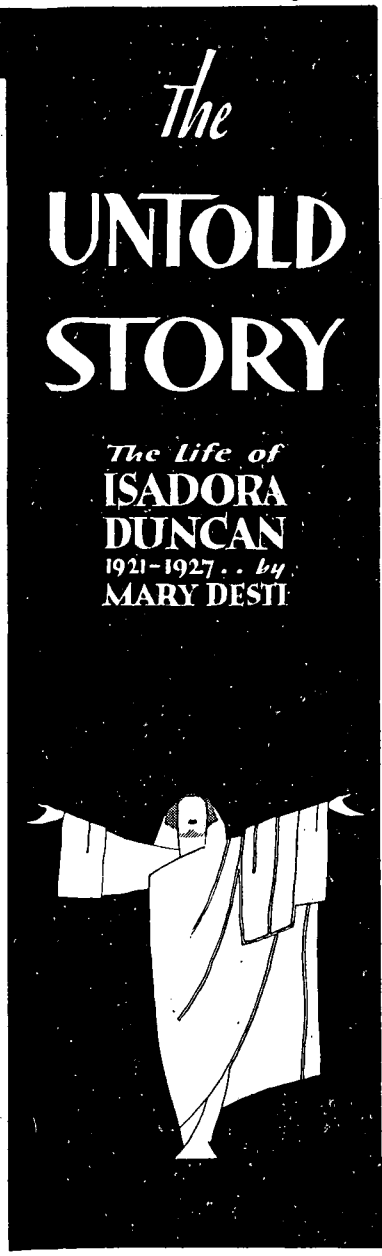

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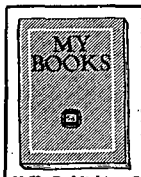

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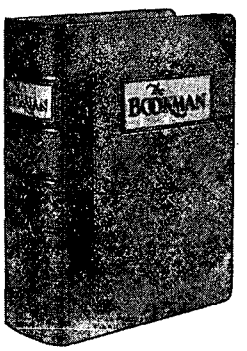

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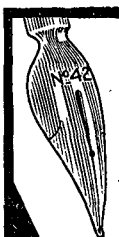

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THE BOOKMAN

Edited by Seward Collins

MARCH, 1929 VOL. LXIX; NO. I

A FELINE WORLD

by Robert Herrick

A RECENT story by a clever Englishwoman opens with a young woman standing in front of a Riviera hotel, emotionally upset because of "words" she had with her woman companion. Another older woman presently comes forth from the hotel, looks at the first one intriguingly; they join and, exchanging noncommittal remarks, proceed into town. It is then that the young woman, so overwrought in the street, fades from the story and the reader never learns what the words were about, probably nothing of significance. Other salient passages from the same story (which is having some vogue and is considered of the better class of contemporary novels) concern the emotions of three women watching a tennis game at the Casino at Monte Carlo, the mutual reactions of an ill-assorted, hill-climbing picnic party and notably the ruffling of the social surface of a bridge party on the appearance in the hotel card room of the "intriguing" woman, who serves as one heroine for the tale. It is not the slightness of incident in these scenes that has arrested my attention. The English novel has always been famed for its still-life pictures: the immortal Jane achieved fame in that manner, not to mention the tortuous Henry (who, as artist, was more than half woman). It is, rather, the incidence of the scenes, the stress laid on emotional reactions among the women themselves, such as customarily only women feel and surely only women would consider important enough to record at length.

Were an old time book reviewer to try to summarize the "story" with the important incidents of this novel, he would find it sifting through his fingers like a rope of sand. The things that seemed of ultimate significance, doubtless to the writer and perhaps to the reviewer when he was under the spell of the tale, would in recollection be too subtle, too fraught with nuance and innuendo to be coarsely re-stated. They would be such events as the emotionally overwrought young woman before the Riviera hotel, or the meeting of the older woman heroine, her son and the older woman's young woman admirer, a new sort of triangle—situations to be felt rather than clumsily analyzed or recounted. Another similar case is life in an English

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woman's college as it has been described recently by a young woman writer: it is not filled with sports and talk, as in older novels written by men or by women trying to write as men would write. The substance is rather feelings, subtleties of emotional relationships among a lot of young women herded together.

I said casually, "women trying to write as men would write", thinking in the terms of old-fashioned fiction. Apart from the immortal Jane, there have been in the past many women novelists—excellent ones, too, from the beginning. But in deference to the convention that this was a male world, or because they were new at the game, they did not dare to write about what merely interests women. Such women novelists wrote of men's interests more or less successfully in men fashion. Yet women have always been the chief patrons of the novel: they support the lending libraries and it is for them that each season our publishers prepare such generous lists of "new fiction". Only recently, however, have women taken to writing novels themselves so commonly that quite a half, more likely two-thirds, of the new titles are books written by women. Even more recently have these younger women novelists disregarded the tradition that this is primarily a man's world and have taken to describing boldly their own primary interests, among themselves, for themselves. Just as it has long been an exploded delusion of the male that women dress to attract his attention and admiration, so now he must give up the delusion that women are really interested in the things he cares most about, hunting and sporting, money-making and love-making, *au mâle*. Of course, some women enjoy these things, play the market and fly planes (as stunts for the front page rather than for comfort) but, as a rule, they prefer their own avocations. It is altogether natural and proper that women, having learned the pleasures and possible prosperity of authorship, should take to story writing in flocks, instead of singly, timidly, and that they should discard the purely male concerns of the older fiction and write frankly, instead, about what pleases and interests them. They still buy and consume most fiction as they do most candy and cosmetics. I am not deploring the tendency; merely rubbing my eyes, so to speak, and trying to get my bearings in the new fiction world that I find myself in.

II

I do not deny that I miss the stir of the old-time, standard fiction and some of its interests. I was never strong for mere martial exploits or the simple adventure stuff, which I felt was suited to the adolescent mind. The man on horseback, mounting the long hill, never thrilled me (hardly more than the ladies about the teacups on an English lawn in a Henry James novel) but I miss the inns and the fox hunts, the brawls and blows and, above all, I miss the talk about politics and bawdy and religion and the reorganizing of our bad, old world (in the Disraeli and, later, the Wells manner). Such talk was like the smoking rooms on old-time ocean liners where women never intruded, where one got good male drink such as hot toddy and brandy and soda, not the hip-pocket flask liquor of our women novelists. Think of the variety of mere male interests in *Anna Karenina* or *War and Peace,* the booze and discussion, the interminable discussions which came out where one went in, but kept one amused all the same! Think of the business, mostly small business, of the Balzac stories when women of a certain class were confined to the salon or the boudoir, with an occasional outing at the opera! . . . On the whole I think it is the talk that I miss most, mature talk even when the characters were very young. The characters in these men's novels were older than the average of today or acted older because the antics and the dreams of adolescents were not then considered important.

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John Inglesant—I happened to read it for the first time last year—is a good specimen of the male novel, with its thronging pictures of Englishmen fighting and discussing, of Italy and Italian priests intriguing, with ladies and *amour* merely incidental. Trollope chronicled a lot of small beer, trivial matters treated with that ponderous seriousness characteristic of the British, but it was not the emotional small beer of the introvert. Something was doing even among the clerics and the country gentry that could rightly be called incident. With Meredith the emphasis becomes more subjective, more psychologically unstable—may we call Meredith our first eminent woman novelist? Yet Meredith, in obedience to the male tradition still potent in his day, set his inner dramas in a framework of outer movements, not confined to the tea table or boudoir or night club. Hardy, of course, dealt plentifully with human emotions and with men and women under the stress of sex emotion, but he felt our world so large, with such intricate dependence between the human and the unhuman elements, that the reader even of *Jude the Obscure* never has the impression of a sole preoccupation with emotional subtleties, subjective illusions. Certainly, never with purely social reactions and complications. Think of Tess and the farms where she worked, how rich it all was in details of mere living!

Coming down to a younger generation, but not the youngest, Wells betrayed from the start the necessity of petticoats in his world, but not of their special preoccupations. Whenever he can tear himself away from mere sex, he launches forth into abstractions, dramatizing ideas so interestingly that any mere man who has "finished with the women business" can by easy skipping get a readable tale without the petticoats. With Bennett, on the contrary, we have moved farther along toward feminization. Women domestically, as well as emotionally, make up the larger part of his books; even the males are feminized: they act and usually talk like women and their chief preoccupations are the petty daily affairs belonging in general to the home.

III

What women are doing to the novel, now that they have taken to expressing themselves through this medium, is, I am aware, a large and amorphous subject, where I may easily become didactic and foolish from overstatement. Nobody, however, can read the voluminous works of Miss May Sinclair (as contrasted with those solid monuments left by George Eliot) without realizing that there is a shift in emphasis; that from *The Divine Fire* and on he is looking through a woman's eyes on a world of hectic tensions, wherein he misses many familiar landmarks and is conscious of the distortion of others. . . . What women have not done to the novel in a brief twenty years or so! They know now that they are writing mostly for their own sex and naturally strive to display their *expertise* in matters peculiar to their sex, more intimate than dress or deportment. Necessarily, they vary in their manner as widely as men ever did, from Miss Rebecca West with her psycho-analytic melodrama to Mrs. Virginia Woolf and the overweighted moment. And there are those, of course, like Mrs. Atherton, who brandish a pseudo-masculinity or, *per contra,* a saccharine femininity of the old type.

I am casually mentioning only the more obvious features of this change. These younger women novelists, of course, deal largely in emotions, first of all sex emotions and, what must surprise the conventional man who was taught that as a sex women were not as vividly sexual as the "pursuing" male, their novels reveal them as more preoccupied with sex, if anything, than men are. Not quite in the same way, perhaps. It is the approach, rather than the accomplishment, of passion which intrigues them and in this field they have shown their

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brothers of the craft many new tricks of innuendo and suggestion more effective erotically than his blunt "some kisses and to bed".

Women know the neurotic sides of sex, which do not eventuate in either marriage or maternity, as well as what once was called (with a hush) the perverted side, the wooing of one's own sex. A disturbing number of recent stories by women deal with this taboo and are not overly vague in the handling of it. We must assume that it interests many of their readers.

As for sentimental love distinct from sex passion (in the old-fashioned categories, that is) again, as might be expected, the woman practitioner is subtler than the male in discriminating among delicate reactions. Men novelists, even the feminine ones such as James and Proust, approach the emotional glamour of the sex debate with certain masculine oversimplifications which make their treatment of the paramount passion sometimes wearisome and, to women, exasperating. Women writers show us so many ways of being in love and out of love—at the same time, in some cases. They quite frankly portray women, heroines, too, as polyandrous. My mind recalls a recent story by an excellent young writer that portrays a black woman—an admirable creature, too—with a dozen children, no two of whom have the same father. To be sure, this heroine was colored, but one feels that the author of *Scarlet Sister Mary* did not mean this fact to change her inferences. "Si May-e" had one husband and one "love child" (by him) and the rest of her brood she frankly recognized were of the flesh, though lovable and loved. And life was good with a new man and a new baby every year or eighteen months.

Another thing they have dared to do, these young women writers, is to paint the slut to life. Men, of course, have included sluts in their fictions, but of a coarse and obvious sort, like Doll Tearsheet and her sisters. Women are showing us subtler varieties of the type. I have in mind a neat tale wherein a wretched, little, perverted, neurasthenic and alcoholic puss chases men about New York, brazenly inducing them to gratify her senses while she is still outwardly a child and finally marrying one of these men, only to seduce another before the honeymoon is over.

The curious and admirable quality about the drawing of this particular slut is that her creator is so fair to her—and so deadly! She understands her heroine much better than any man could and is not crudely denunciatory of a character that as a woman, she perhaps realizes, many of her sisters share with her, though decorously concealed from men's eyes. I think that these stories realistically revealing the tricks of the slut are useful, especially for the edification of romantic young men. . . .

Then there is the maternal instinct so highly sentimentalized by the old novelists. The young women writers are keenly observant of the defects of mothers and remorseless in exposing their feebleness. Oddly enough, I can't recall any instance in their stories of "beautiful motherhood", though doubtless there must be some. It is one of man's imaginative illusions that all normal women are instinctive mothers, from the cradle up, mothering dolls, mothering babies, their own and others', and finally mothering men and all the world. Which pretty sentimentality is largely not true to the facts. Doctors, especially pediatricians, as well as these clever young women writers, know that the devoted mother is as rare a product, possibly rarer, than the good father, and the baby is due just as often to the man's domestic desires as to the woman's instinct for reproduction.

In short, if men will read sagaciously what these young women say, and also note what they do not say, they will learn far more about the world, the woman side of it, than they could glean from the old heavyweight classics of fiction or from their own intuitions. . . .

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IV

Love, passion, matrimony and babies are not the preponderating interests of all women that men have thought them to be. There are many other competing interests—love of display, of social prestige, the will to power (tyranny) and, above all, desire for comfort and convenience. One does not have to look far today to realize how completely women have changed the world to suit their needs, their natures. "Why these gewgaws of glass vases and cardcases, all this colored plush in the new motor cars?" I demanded irritably of the smart young salesman who was trying to demonstrate his new car by showing off the instrument board and the lights, instead of uncovering the engine. "Why this easy steering wheel, like the handle of a baby carriage, and all the little devices of the new 'self-driving' cars?" "Because," said the young man, who was tailored and slicked like a clothing model, "all cars today are built for women to drive." True! A brief twenty years ago, I remember, when the daring motorist found himself oftener than not underneath his car covered with grime, sweatily trying to discover why the damned thing wouldn't go, there were naturally fewer women drivers and less plush. But these days of fool-proof cars, comfortably enclosed against all weathers, invite women to drive. In their own manner they have fitted up their new motor toys with all sorts of doll's house knickknacks. It is the same with the home from whose grosser tyrannies women are fast escaping. According to my guides, the young women novelists, woman's chief preoccupation is not now with the home, nor with the male, except incidentally as a means to some end: they are first and always preoccupied with themselves, not simply as egotists (though they can compete with men in that) but rather with the reactions, many and subtle, which are set up when they come together. It is much simpler when men meet, even as strangers or casual acquaintances or when of different social strata. Men, as a rule, seem to have nothing to hide from each other: they bore one another with confidences and frankness, assuming a basis of common humanity possessed by all men. But women, however voluble they may be when they meet, however confiding outwardly, invariably retain a reserve, do not give up all they think or feel. How many women of any age will admit that another woman has their ultimate confidence? If women could be priests, how popular would they be in the confessional? Even between mothers and daughters there is usually a barrier, a subtle potentiality of hostility.

Such a state of armed neutrality, wary and watchful, in the social relations of women with each other offers to the observant eye of the woman novelist her best material. She has promptly grasped her opportunity. How she has grasped it and is squeezing it, only those who are reading contemporary fiction in bulk, as I have been doing, can realize. I had never dreamed, novelist and ancient feminist as I am, that women could harbor so many devious, tortuous reactions to the simplest events and emotions. It frightens me to think what may be going on at any moment inside the apparently gentle and simple-minded female seated next me at the theatre or in the subway. Now that their own writers are giving them away, I know that those superficial facial expressions with which I am familiar are nothing better than a cosmetic used as disguise. If they want anything—and they do want many things—they prefer to get it in their own way, indirectly—just why, their Maker alone knows. Perhaps, because for indeterminate centuries they have learned from cruel experiences and from baulked desires that the direct approach to their ends would be fatal. The oblique approach is safer, and habit has given zest to the game of outwitting not merely the male but, more especially, their true competitors, women. "What is she up to?" is the instinctive reaction of woman to every word

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and gesture of another woman; what is her true honest-to-God objective?

V

This technique of life is what a subtle woman I know calls "the indirect method". She would scorn for herself a direct or open way of dealing with men or women, even with her own sons, as crude, inartistic, and will take infinite pains, requiring a ceaseless patience, to come indirectly to her objective. Sometimes the results are startling, and sometimes forlorn. . . . I call it the feline method and, whenever I witness the human process, a picture rises inevitably before my eyes.

When I drive into the road to my garage which leads for a short space through bushes and long grass, I am likely as not to catch a glimpse of a lithe, gray or black animal hidden in the underbrush beside the road, crouching there in the patient way that only a cat can crouch, for hours maybe, waiting for something. I know only too well what she is waiting for—a bird. That is why I keep no cats of my own, much as I admire their lithe beauty and secretive ways. Dogs are noisy and rough and grossly indifferent often to the culture of flowers, but there is something open, frank and male about the dog, even the petted and feminized breeds: he lets you know at once what he wants and unless inhibited by fear goes directly for it—generally missing it, to be sure. Even the woodchuck and the rabbit, both of whom live on the hill between the garage and the house, destructive as they are, are not cunning and grim and tireless like the cat. I have known one of these lone felines—they never hunt in pack—to sit for hours in the brush or long grass, waiting for its prey to come within reach. And then pounce with one sure, deft leap! There is nothing like it in our tamed, domesticated world for grace, furtive determination, slyness—and cruelty. No other wild animal can hear the tread of the cat or, apparently, smell it. Once surprised, these crouching pussies will lope off swiftly, negligently, like poor hunted innocents! But I know very well they are merely hiding back of the garage, to resume their hunt after I shall have disappeared.

They will no more give over their objective—fresh bird meat—than their human sisters will give over the long hunt for their objectives, whatever they may be. . . . That, in sum, I feel to be the microcosm of the world we are entering in these clever stories now being written by women for women about the woman's world. It is a well padded, comfortable and convenient place, and there are a lot of demure, softly-spoken and prettily dressed little pussies running about it, intent on their own errands. But I do not flatter myself that I shall ever know what those errands are unless by chance I, myself, come into the pattern of their desires as a handy instrument. For my own satisfaction, I am summing up a few of the salient features of this feline world, gleaned from my reading so much about it. It is made for comfort, ease—in a word, Prosperity (which accounts for the popularity of the Republican Party among our "leading" women). It is not a world of idealisms or social experiments. It is not a world of ideas or theories and in it speech, though used abundantly, is merely protective coloration, in which the *cliché* abounds. It is, naturally, an intensely competitive world and, I fear me, a cruel one. There will be no active opposition in it to the use of poison gas, for defense, of course, in the next war. . . . And it is the male who has made, is making all this possible, through his abdications and indifferences. His is the cat's paw.

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THE POSITION OF LIAM O'FLAHERTY

by William Troy

LIAM O'FLAHERTY, at the age of thirty-two, has written five novels, four volumes of short stories, a biography and a large number of sketches and short stories soon to be gathered together in another collection. His reputation, however, is commensurate neither with this record of sustained creative energy nor with the easily recognizable distinction of his work. Literary popularity is never a matter of significance in speaking about a serious artist; but the reasons behind the critical apathy in the present instance are more interesting than usual. To consider them is to discover something about the mechanism of literary popularity at any time. It is also one excellent means of approaching certain of the essential features of this writer's contribution to the literature of our age. For the two things which are responsible for the neglect of O'Flaherty are at the same time inseparable from the deepest meaning and value of his work: his nationality and his fondness for melodrama.

The disadvantages of being an Irish writer today would be numerous even were it possible for the English reviews to be less loyal to their country and their class. Liam O'Flaherty has had at least as much to overcome in detaching himself from the settled mist of the "Celtic renaissance" as the writers of that movement had in detaching themselves from the earlier schools of Lever and Boucicault. The unfortunate result is that O'Flaherty has perhaps suffered more than he has gained by the association. It would seem pretty definite that the critical portion of the public is as avid of novelty as the common reader; and both certainly have had reason of late to become rather stalely habituated to the periodic emergence of ambitious talent in Ireland. At any rate an unmistakable tone of weariness has become the custom in whatever is written about this writer in the few literary journals which do not altogether ignore him. Actually, O'Flaherty's relation to the double tradition of Anglo-Irish literature is unique and distinct. He is on the side of Synge and Joyce, as against the side of Swift and Shaw; but he does not belong unreservedly with either of those writers. Neither intellectual refinement nor the impedimenta of culture and religion operate to confuse the complete identification with nature which is the predominant feature of his work. He is closer to the unknown writers of the early Gaelic folk literature than to any of his contemporaries. He is less the product of any modern school than of that period when European culture had not yet entirely lost its innocence.

There can be no question that all the novels of O'Flaherty belong to the category of melodrama; there can be equally little doubt that judgment of their value has been affected by the prevailing distrust of this mode. The objections to the mode have never been clearly formulated, although ad-

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herence to it has often been enough to discredit much of the work of Conrad and Dostoievski in the eyes of some critics. In the Greek sense, a melodrama meant simply a play with music; but the term was never used to differentiate such entertainment from a tragedy by Æschylus, for instance, which has nevertheless most of the objectionable features of a modern melodrama. Today we signify by the term any composition in which the element of action seems exaggerated or strained beyond certain vaguely determined limits. What we probably mean is the extension of action beyond the boundaries to which we are accustomed in normal social experience. This restriction may apply with considerable justice to certain works of drama and fiction of inferior merit; but applied to other more pretentious works of the imagination it seems to involve an inconsistency. Perhaps the misconception rests on a failure to determine the nature of the relationship between action and theme, on the failure to recognize that the treatment of certain themes requires the extension of action on a more strenuous and heroic plane than the normal.

Melodrama, so considered, might be accepted as the elaboration of human motives on a grand scale, against immense backgrounds, and to the accompaniment of enormous music. In terms of function, one might discover in this form the most appropriate medium for the working out of certain crises or highly intensified human situations, the proper conditions for which depend on a heightening of the common laws of circumstance. However, any such defense of melodrama as a legitimate mode has nothing to do with its value in comparison with other recognized modes or with any possible system of values of its own. It is possible to write *good* melodramas, like *Macbeth* or *The Duchess of Malfi;* it is also possible to write *bad* melodramas, like any number of plays written in Shakespeare's time or like any number of books written in our own. It is part of O'Flaherty's distinction as a novelist that he has had the courage, throughout all his five novels, to adopt what is at once the most dangerous and the most unpopular of literary modes.

The fact that all of O'Flaherty's novels, from *Thy Neighbour's Wife* to *The Assassin,* adhere to the one mode suggests that it is inevitable for the particular pattern of life that has shaped itself in his imagination. His themes dictate the choice, themes which resolve themselves always into the larger and more violent conflicts of melodrama. Should this explanation prove insufficient, there remains the exceptional nature of the background against which these themes are represented. Modern Ireland is a portion of the earth's surface which it would be necessary to imagine if it did not exist. The Aran Islands, in which O'Flaherty was born, are not unlike those western islands around which Odysseus sailed and adventured; and Dublin, in the civilized modern mind, often takes on the colors of the Elizabethan version of the Italian cities of the Renaissance. It is clear that whatever temperamental predilection O'Flaherty may have had toward the writing of melodrama was strengthened by the inherent conditions of his environment.

For convenience O'Flaherty's work may be divided into those novels and tales which have Dublin, and those which have his native Aran, for their setting. Of the Dublin group, *The Informer, The Assassin,* and two earlier stories, *The Sniper* and *Civil War,* are based on real or imagined circumstances of the period of insurrection and disorder through which that city has passed in the last twelve years. As a whole they constitute the most remarkable record of the period which we are likely to receive: the most complete because derived largely from personal observation and participation; the most reliable because written without any other bias than that of artistic selection.

The Informer, as the title suggests, is a novel of the revolutionary half-world, the

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story of Gypo Nolan who betrays his friend to the police for twenty pounds. Less than one page is devoted to the actual capture and death of the betrayed man. All the interest is centered on the subsequent psychological history of the informer; his failure to liberate himself from the consciousness of the crime except through the expiation of death affords the theme. To appreciate his state of soul it is always necessary to remember the peculiar ambient of shame and horror that surrounds his crime in Ireland. Although low enough down on the moral scale of society, Gypo Nolan proves himself at bottom hopelessly loyal to the one code of morality that he can understand. How his guilt makes him give himself away at every turn, at every word, every movement, until he is finally shot down on his own doorstep, is told with a profound command of the Judas psychology. *The Informer* is a study in conscience; it might even be described as a melodrama of the conscience.

In *The Assassin,* his last published novel, O'Flaherty essays the most ambitious study of the revolutionist psychology yet attempted in fiction. Here the object of the action, its specific political or social aspects are completely ignored. Also, the whole explicit action is subordinated to the conflict of motives, sometimes clear, sometimes strangely obscure, operating in the mind of the chief conspirator. Every step in Michael McDara's procedure from the moment of his return to Dublin—his selection of confederates, his preparations for the deed, his conduct after the deed—is described in a minute and exciting manner. At the beginning he is presented as the perfect and idealized archetype of the tyrannicide. As such he is thoroughly contrasted with each of his colleagues: Ketch, the professional thug, expert in murder as a trade; Tumulty, a mouthy sentimentalist, an inveterate patriot of the old order. Neither is able to rise to the hard purity of McDara's own philosophy of revolution. "Nobody had the *idea,*" he explains, referring to the past. "Without an idea behind it, every political act becomes immoral and unnecessary. Such an act as this should be done in cold blood, not for motives of revenge or greed or for the purpose of seizing power or for anything else. Merely to cut off the head that is blocking the foreward movement of the mass. . . . This act must also be directed against the idea of God." In such speeches as this McDara is sustained by his reason and his eloquence; but at other moments he reverts to his peasant origin, remembering his own mother and the creed of his childhood, feeling suddenly terrified at the enormity of the gesture he is making against society. In the finest scene of the book the contrasted mental states of the three conspirators are shown as they sit about in a cheap furnished room on the eve of the murder. Here the closeness of observation is consummate; no movement, no vibration of the tense atmosphere is left unobserved as a possible source of intimate revelation. The style is attuned to the mood of the situation with a precision calculated to make the reader also share in the physical suspense. Ketch lies stretched out on the bed; Tumulty moves about nervously, talking foolishly to conceal his terror; but McDara, at the climax of his dream, ruminates on the sordidness of his surroundings, the cowardice and worthlessness of his companions, the essential waste and futility of his scheme.

If *The Informer* was a melodrama of the soul, with conscience as the principal protagonist, this last novel of O'Flaherty's is a melodrama of the intellect, founded on the immemorial strife between the will and the memory, between what the mind would determine and what life has decreed. At the end McDara is not strong enough to unbind the cords of tradition and sentiment which chain him to his emotional past, to whose aggregate symbol, on bended knees, he finally succumbs: "Mother, forgive me!" He has been clever enough to make his escape after the assassination quite certain; but the

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train which hastens him away from Ireland, of whose every beauty he is now made suddenly aware, bears an outcast and a failure. Suicide awaits him as soon as he reaches London.

Mr. Gilhooley represents an interesting effort on the part of O'Flaherty to extend his range of interest into a new sphere of Dublin society, the more quiescent, distinctly more bourgeois, society that is now forming out of the old. Gilhooley is a successful, middle-aged engineer who has come back to Ireland to recover his health after twenty years spent in South America. His is a full-length portrait of *l'homme moyen sensuel.* The sure sense of a wasted capacity for strong feeling, the depression of autumnal yearning make him ripe for his affair with the girl whom he picks up one night on the pavements. The differences in age and sensibility make the relationship impossible from the beginning. Tragedy becomes certain when Gilhooley's affection burns gradually into the fierce passion of middle-age. Perhaps the meaning of their last terrible scene in the flat, with its resolution of the theme into the familiar nightmare of jealousy and death, can be felt only by recognition of the man's age and essential normalcy. The girl's betrayal is for him the defeat of his life. But about this book as a whole one feels a lessening of strain, especially of poetic strain, as though O'Flaherty were telling Mr. Gilhooley's story more out of duty than out of any profound desire of the imagination.

The stories in *Spring Sowing* and *The Tent* should make their appeal even to those readers who are unable to respond to the larger patterns of the novels. The trained intensity of style, the economy of detail, the exact sharpness of perception appear here with special appropriateness and combine to place these stories among the most distinguished of our time. Almost every phase of Irish life is touched on, although for the most part they deal with the land. Such stories as *Milking Time, Three Lambs* and the title-story of *Spring Sowing* are themselves like the rich exhalations of the soil; *Going into Exile* is a record of its tragedy, *The Bladder* and *The Old Hunter* of its robust humors. Perhaps the most perfect in achievement of all these little stories is *Birth* (published in the limited edition entitled *The Fairy Goose*), which is the simple account of a group of peasants gathered together near a meadow at night to attend the birth of a calf. But the most individual are those in which O'Flaherty writes about a lost thrust, or the capture of a fish, or a sea gull's first flight—unsentimental studies of animal life written with a fastidious interest usually reserved for human beings alone. From all of O'Flaherty's stories, however, one takes away a similar impression of the profound solidarity of nature, all of her manifestations being of equal importance to the artist who admits her superiority.

This conviction of the impenetrable identity of all physical nature receives its grandest expression in *The Black Soul,* the second, and the most majestic, of O'Flaherty's novels. "*The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm," wrote AE, but closer is the resemblance to a symphony, a vast prose symphony, whose most proper divisions are the four seasons of the year. The setting is Inverara, "the island of death, the island of defeated peoples, come thither through the ages over the sea pursued by their enemies"; its characters are its people, seated "on the cliffs dreaming of the past of their fathers, dreaming of the sea, the wind, the moon, the stars, the scattered remnants of an army, the remains of a feast eaten by dogs, the shattering of a maniac's ambition". Into this world comes the Stranger, bringing with him the sick body and tired soul of one who has lived too long on the mainland. The whole tempestuous drama of the book is in full process in Fergus O'Connor's brain before it is realized in explicit action. There begins at once his long struggle to yield himself to life as life becomes crystallized for him in his love of

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Little Mary, the wife of the peasant with whom he has taken lodging. Mary is a kind of island Cybele; she has no more character, in the usual sense, than nature herself; she is as hard, as wild and as beautiful. But Fergus is obliged to bore down through every layer of sentiment, culture, illusion which buries the reality of his being. The old conflict between nature and the intellect—the single underlying theme of all O'Flaherty's novels—here is staged against the most opulent background of physical nature, elaborated with all the resources of a rich, poetic prose, and resolved finally in one of the most powerful scenes in modern fiction. During the fierce struggle with Red John in the cleft of rocks on the coast, Fergus is made to see the meaning of life through the meaning of death. Through action he is at last able to free himself. It would be much closer to a certain tradition of romantic fiction to have Fergus, instead of Red John, meet his end in this scene. But such a solution would cause the deeper implication of the novel to be lost. The victory of Fergus is essential if the positive import of the theme is to be established: the complete reaffirmation of physical experience as the means of bringing man back into harmony with his universe.

The Black Soul is the best of O'Flaherty's novels because of the grandeur and sonority of the theme and because of the abundance of those qualities of language and perception for which his work as a whole is distinguished. These qualities are essentially of a poetic order and, as such, difficult to define or describe by means of any available critical equivalents, although plainly manifest on every page. Moreover, they are qualities which should make a potent appeal to any modern reader. (The theme of *The Black Soul,* for example, is profoundly modern, but it is also *more* than modern.) Nature, not as the dark intoxicant of the earlier romanticists, but as something apprehended in the flesh, may come to be more and more accepted by our writers as the superstructure of our intellectual world crumbles about their feet. In the meantime, when most of our novelists seem to be frantically entrapped among the ruins, the reading of O'Flaherty is like a tonic and a promise.

THE BOOKS OF LIAM O'FLAHERTY

NOVELS

Thy Neighbor's Wife, *Liveright, 1924*
The Black Soul, *Liveright, 1925*
The Informer, *Knopf, 1926*
Mr. Gilhooley, *Harcourt, Brace, 1927*
The Assassin, *Harcourt, Brace, 1928*

SHORT STORIES

Spring Sowing, *Knopf, 1926*
The Tent and Other Stories, *Jonathan Cape (London) 1926*
The Fairy Goose and Other Stories, *Random House, 1929*

BIOGRAPHY

The Life of Tim Healy, *Harcourt, Brace, 1927*

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Three Poems of the War, by Edmund Blunden

AT SENLIS ONCE

O how comely it was and how reviving
When with clay and with death no longer striving
  Down firm roads we came to houses
With women chattering and green grass thriving.

Now though rains in a cataract descended,
We could glow, with our tribulation ended—
  Count not days, the present only
Was thought of, how could it ever be expended?

Clad so cleanly, this remnant of poor wretches
Picked up life like the hens in orchard ditches,
  Gazed on the mill sails, heard the church bell,
Found an honest glass all manner of riches.

How they crowded the barn with lusty laughter,
Hailed the pierrots and shook each shadowy rafter,
  Even could ridicule their own sufferings,
Sang as though nothing but joy came after!

THE ZONNEBEKE ROAD

Morning, if this late withered light can claim
Some kindred with that merry flame
Which the young day was wont to fling through space!
Agony stares from each gray face.
And yet the day is come; stand down! stand down!
Your hands unclasp from rifles while you can;
The frost has pierced them to the bended bone?
Why, see old Stevens there, that iron man,
Melting the ice to shave his grotesque chin!
Go ask him, shall we win?
I never liked this bay, some foolish fear
Caught me the first time that I came in here;

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That dugout fallen in awakes, perhaps,
Some formless haunting of some corpse's chaps.
True, and wherever we have held the line,
There were such corners, seeming-saturnine
For no good cause;
Now where Haymarket starts,
That is no place for soldiers with weak hearts;
The minenwerfers have it to the inch.
Look, how the snow dust whisks along the road
Piteous and silly; the stones themselves must flinch
In this east wind; the low sky like a load
Hangs over—a dead weight. But what a pain
Must gnaw where its gray cheek
Crushes the shell-chopped trees that fang the plain—
The ice-bound throat gulps out a gargoyle shriek.
The wretched wire before the village line
Rattles like rusty brambles or dead bine,
And then the daylight oozes into dun;
Black pillars, those are trees where roadways run.
Even Ypres now would warm our souls; fond fool,
Our tour's but one night old, seven more to cool!
O screaming dumbness, O dull clashing death,
Shreds of dead grass and willows, homes and men,
Watch as you will, I'll clench my chattering teeth
And freeze you back with that one hope, disdain.

PILLBOX

Just see what's happening, Worley!—Worley rose
And round the angled doorway thrust his nose
And Sergeant Hyde went too to snuff the air.
Then war brought down his fist, and missed the pair!
Yet Hyde was scratched by a splinter, the blood came,
And out burst terrors that he'd striven to tame,
A good man, Hyde, for weeks. *I'm blown to bits,*
He groans, he screams. *Come, Bluffer, where's your wits?*
Says Worley, *Bluffer! you've a blighty, man!*
All in the pillbox urged him, here began
His freedom: *Think of Eastbourne and your dad.*
The poor man lay at length and brief and mad
Flung out his cry of doom; soon ebbed and dumb
He yielded. Worley with a tot of rum
And shouting in his face could not restore him.
The ship of Charon over channel bore him.
All marvelled even on that most deathly day
To see this life so spirited away.

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DO I HEAR TWENTY THOUSAND?

by Robert Benchley

The scene is in the "Three Æons for Lunch" Club, made up of the shades of those authors who have "done something" while on earth. Shades of advertising men are admitted because advertising is really a form of belles-lettres and, besides, they keep a club going. SHELLEY, SWIFT, TENNYSON, POPE, POE *and others are lounging about the library table preparatory to going in to lunch.*

SHELLEY *picks up a copy of the February issue of* Book News from the Earth *and thumbs its pages over with a badly assumed nonchalance.*

SHELLEY

Ho-hum! I wonder what the news is from the old book-mart.

SWIFT

If you're looking for the article on the Jerome Kern book auction, it's on page 45. Congratulations.

SHELLEY

(*blushing furiously*)

Jerome Kern book-auction? Has there been a—oh, yes, you mean the auction of Jerome Kern's library.

(*Turns unerringly to page* 45.)

SWIFT

Don't be naïve. You read all about it yesterday at that very table. You even copied out the various prices the books brought.

SHELLEY

(*trying to read article as if for first time*)

Honestly, Dean, I wasn't reading—that was this article on Richard Halliburton I was reading—well, I'll be darned—honestly, Dean, this is the first time I knew about this——

POE

What's all the blushing about?

(*to the steward*)

Another round of the same, Waters.

TENNYSON

Not for me, Edgar, thanks. Not in the middle of the day.

POE

Another round of the same, Waters. . . . Come on, Bysshe, what's in the magazine you want us to know about?

SWIFT

Oh, they had an auction in New York of Jerome Kern's library and Bysshe was in the Big Money. . . . $68,000, wasn't it, Bysshie?

SHELLEY

Well, that's what it seems to say here. I don't understand it.

(*Puts magazine down where it can easily be reached by the others.*)

POE

(*picking it up*)

What else was sold?

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SWIFT

Oh, you didn't come off so badly, Eddie. An old letter of yours about Mrs. Browning was in the money, too.

POE

My God! Nineteen thousand five hundred! Say, that's not so bad, is it—for a letter, I mean?

SWIFT

Not so *bad!* It's *perfect!* You never earned nineteen thousand five hundred in your whole life. I almost tied you, though. Some sucker paid seventeen thousand for a first edition of *Gulliver.*

TENNYSON

(*yawning slightly*)

May I take a look at that, please?

SHELLEY

Your *Maud* drew down something like nine thousand.

SWIFT

I thought you hadn't read the article, Bysshe.

SHELLEY

I just saw that item—it was right there under mine.

TENNYSON

(*reading*)

Oh, well, it was just a portion of the manuscript—probably a couple of stanzas. Anyway, I don't like the idea of auctioning off things like that. It sort of takes some of the beauty away.

SWIFT

What beauty is that?

TENNYSON

You wouldn't understand, Swift.

LAMB

I think Alfy is right. It rather cheapens the thing to have a lot of Americans and things bidding for one's work.

POE

Well, a lot of Americans and things fell pretty heavily for some old hack-work of yours, Charlie. You ran second to Bysshe with a neat $48,000.

LAMB

Who—me? Who—I? Forty-eight thousand? For what?

POE

For a mess of stuff you did for *Hone's Weekly,* it says here.

LAMB

Well, I'll be darned. Why, I dashed that off in about an hour a week. Was always late with my copy, too. Hone used to get crazy.

POE

He'd be crazier if he knew that it was worth forty-eight grand now.

SWIFT

You weren't such a big money-maker as a subject, though, Charlie. That thing Bill Wordsworth did about you after you died got only a measly twenty-five hundred.

LAMB

You mean "Ode to the Memory of Charles Lamb?"

SWIFT

Look—he remembers the title!

LAMB

I never cared very much about that myself. It didn't seem to me that Bill did all he might have done with the material.

WORDSWORTH

(*putting down his newspaper*)

No? Well, I did all I felt like doing. I had to have something in for the Christmas number and that was all I could think of. They already had a poem scheduled on Milton, which was what I wanted to do.

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LAMB

I would say that a poem by you on Milton would be worth about seven dollars now—on the original papyrus.

WORDSWORTH

(*going back to his newspaper*)

Yeah?

SHELLEY

I'm surprised to see that the original manuscript of Keats's "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill" got only $17,000.

(*As the others are talking,* SHELLEY *repeats, a bit louder.*)

I'm surprised to see that the original manuscript of Keats's "I stood tip-toe" got only $17,000.

SWIFT

I heard you the first time, Bysshe. You're surprised that Keats's "I stood tip-toe" got only $17,000.

SHELLEY

Yes. I always rather liked that. Nothing wonderful, of course, but, if my stuff got $68,000, I should think that Keatsie's would get more than $17,000.

SWIFT

That was just a few lines of Keats, Bysshe, and stuck into an ordinary edition of his works. Yours was the whole, uncut volume of *Queen Mab*—a very fine thing purely from the book-making standpoint, I daresay. Anything that's uncut always gets more money.

POE

By the way, whoever owned that originally didn't think a hell of a lot of it, did he? Not to cut the leaves, I mean.

SHELLEY

It was probably one of those copies the publishers sent me for gifts which I never gave away.

SWIFT

Any time *you* ever gave away a book.

SHELLEY

(*ignoring him*)

Say, what do you know about this! It says that *Queen Mab* got the highest price ever paid for a book at an auction. That doesn't seem believable, does it? I mean, *Queen Mab* wasn't my best, by a long shot.

SWIFT

The Gutenberg Bible got more.

SHELLEY

Yes, but I mean literature.

SWIFT

Oh, the Gutenberg Bible was just a stunt of typesetting, I suppose?

SHELLEY

You know very well what I mean, Dean. I think the Bible is a fine book, a great book, but, after all, the big price that it brought was, in a way, due partly to the fact that Gutenberg set it up. You know that.

POE

I've been adding it up, boys, and right here in this room there is represented about $160,000. What about another round?

TENNYSON

Not for me, thanks. Not in the middle of the day.

POE

Well, $160,000 is a lot of money. We can't let it pass unnoticed . . . Waters! Another round of the same.

WATERS

Yes, sir. . . .

(*aside to* POE)

Was that last round yours, Mr. Poe?

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POE

(*looking in his wallet*)

Why, er—sure! Sure thing! Just put it on my account, Waters.

WATERS

(*aside to* POE)

You're posted, Mr. Poe. I'm sorry.

POE

By George, that's right. Well-er —— Never mind, then, Waters. Er —— Dean, you don't happen to have—er ——

SWIFT

Awfully sorry, old boy. You couldn't have struck me at a worse time—just charge it to me, Waters—oh, that's right—I forgot. *I'm* posted right now.

(LAMB *and* WORDSWORTH, *sensing trouble, have slipped quietly away to lunch.*)

SHELLEY

I really ought to pay for the whole thing, you know, winning all that money. Next time, I shall insist.

(*A new member who has been looking at the magazines all during the conversation approaches the group.*)

NEW MEMBER

I hope you'll pardon me, gentlemen, but I couldn't help overhearing. I hope you'll allow me to pay for the drinks today. My manuscripts wouldn't bring much in the open market right now, but they didn't do so badly in the original sale . . .Waters, will you please bring another round for us all and charge the whole thing to me—Mr. Hopwood, you know. Mr. Avery Hopwood.

WATERS

Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Hopwood.

(*The drinks are brought and the gentlemen carry them in to lunch with them.*)

SHELLEY

(*exiting with the rest*)

I really don't understand it, though, for *Queen Mab* was never one of my favorites.

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MR. BEADLE'S BOOKS

by Henry Morton Robinson

In the autumn of 1841 a rugged youngster still in his middle 'teens descended upon the village of Cooperstown, New York, carrying a mysterious gunny-sack slung over his shoulder. With the air of a man who knows exactly where he is going, he headed for the printing establishment of one Elihu Phinney and in the course of the next half hour had managed to demonstrate to Mr. Phinney precisely how the contents of the gunny-sack could be useful to him in his business. Whereupon the sagacious Mr. Phinney, wishing to retain his hold upon a brace of good things, engaged both the young man and his bag, and promptly set them to work in his printing shop.

The young man was Erastus Beadle, inventor of the dime novel. The burlap sack contained twenty-six hardwood blocks—a hand-carved alphabet with which young Beadle had already lettered the flour-bags, horse-blankets, wagons and farm-utensils of a thousand farmers in northern New York. While working in a grist mill near Pierstown, the village of his birth, young Erastus had noticed the rural crudity (not to say illegibility) of the lettering on most meal-bags. With a jack-knife as his only tool, he had whittled out of rock-oak a complete font of letters. At the age of fifteen he left the mill and set out upon his travels as a journeyman Gutenberg. For three years he led an itinerant life, travelling through the "Indian country" as far west as Ohio and east to Salem, Massachusetts, the home of his Revolutionary forebears. One might have traced his path by the trail of block-lettered bags, tool-cases and implements he left behind him; for a penny a letter he would stamp anything, and the pennies rolled in plentifully when millwrights and farmers beheld the neat magic of his hardwood blocks. But although the life was pleasant and rather lucrative, young Beadle felt its limitations. It was his ambition to be a master printer, to know the utmost possibilities of the typesetter's craft, and to achieve on fine paper the ultimate extension of the effects he was now getting on coarse burlap. Hearing that Elihu Phinney took in an occasional pupil, Beadle apprenticed himself to this frontier typographer, and during the next six years learned everything about printing, binding and stereotyping that an excellent master could teach.

At length it became clear that Phinney could teach his pupil nothing more. And Cooperstown, having one good printer already, could offer no future to a young man of Beadle's potentialities. So the young master moved on to Buffalo and, at the age of twenty-six, set himself up in a shop of his own. Instead of soliciting orders for letter heads and auction labels, Beadle immediately gave evidence of his genius as a publisher. He began to collect the popular lyrics of the day, originally issued in the form of handbills or "broadsides" which sold on the streets

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for a penny. Putting fifty or sixty of these songs into a single 12*mo* volume, Beadle issued his first *Dime Song Book,* a salmon-colored affair, in 1851. The venture was so successful, and the material so easily appropriated, that Beadle continued to publish his *Dime Song Books* until he had printed over two thousand popular songs and ballads of the period. "Dear Father, Come Down with the Stamps", "The Rat-Catcher's Daughter", "Grease the Griddle, Birdie Darling", "Pull Down the Blind" and "The Crackman's Chant" are some of the titles of the old ditties immortalized by the Dime Songsters. In these song books lurked the germ of the yellow-backed dime novel which within a few years was to revolutionize the reading habits of a nation.

In 1852 Beadle turned his attention towards the publication of Game Books and youthful literature of sport and adventure. This medley of *juvenilia* was incorporated into his first literary publication, *The Youth's Casket,* which had a considerable local circulation. During this period Beadle brought out handbooks on riding, cricket, football, pedestrianism, and—to make the list complete—on letter-writing. He called the manual *Beadle's Dime Ladies' Letter-Writer.* Evidently the manuals were profitable, for even during the years of his dime novel dictatorship Beadle never stopped publishing the Game Books and Letter-Writer. In 1863 he added to his list a *Book of Fun,* a compendium of jokes, stories and current humor. In the third volume of this series, Mark Twain's *Jumping Frog* appeared for the first time in book form.

Always perspicacious in divining the needs of his public, Beadle decided that a good home magazine, designed to satisfy every member of the family, would be a profitable enterprise. He had not yet struck the dime novel formula, but was veering closer to it every time he ran a new idea through his press. In 1856 he commenced publication of *The Home Monthly,* a periodical of high quality intended to amuse and edify readers of all ages. The excellent material in this magazine ran its circulation up into the thousands; *The Home Monthly* fell like welcome rain upon a parched, fiction-hungry terrain.

No one knows precisely how he hit upon the idea of the dime novel. But it required no clairvoyant streak in a keen young publisher to see that a steady supply of wholesome, well-written fiction would be eagerly absorbed by a comparatively literate nation of fifty million readers. Looking over the reading-matter of America in the year 1858, what did one see? On the one hand, a line of platitudinous text-books: the *McGuffey Readers, Peter Parley's Primers,* and the blue-backed spellers, geographies and histories of Noah Webster. This pious provender might be diluted with an occasional volume of Cooper or Scott; but, more than likely, it was rendered even soggier by the addition of Bunyan and the Bible. At the other extreme, the elegant "Annuals", "Concordances" and "Memory Albums" supplied a thin trickle of sentimentalized verse in the form of "Thought-Blossoms", "Tokens" and "Gems" for parlor consumption. Sandwiched in between, and partaking of the nature of both, were the magazines of the era—short-lived, local periodicals aimed primarily at feminine readers, and revelling in such titles as *The Young Ladies' Tea-Tray: a monthly bonbonnière of spiritual delicacies, The Seminarian's Confidante*—not to mention that tender perennial, *The Youth's Companion.*

Beadle's plan was as simple as sunrise. He would hire reputable authors to write swift-moving stories of American frontier life; next, he would print those stories on cheap paper and in numbers hitherto inconceivable; finally, he would charge a dime for his product and stand by with bushel baskets to carry off the profits! Engaging Orville J. Victor as his general editor, Beadle brought out his first Dime Novel in the summer of 1860. To a few bibliophiles this extremely rare

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volume is known as *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter,* a salmon-colored volume of one hundred and twenty-eight pages written by Ann S. Stephens.

Malaeska was an immediate success and within a few months 65,000 had been sold. Mrs. Stephens, a well-known authoress, received $250 for her labors and willingly renounced all claim to further royalties. She had been paid at the rate of one-half cent a word, which was a fairly high price for the time, and was glad to work for Mr. Beadle on this cash-and-carry basis. Other successful titles of 1860 were Colonel A. J. H. Duganne's *Massasoit's Daughter,* Orville Victor's *Life of Garibaldi* and Harry Cavendish's *Privateer Cruise.* As with Mrs. Stephens, these authors were paid cash on acceptance. By purchasing his manuscripts outright Beadle took both the risk (which after the first year was non-existent) and the rewards, which were immediate and bountiful. In fact he began to make money so rapidly that his printing shop on William Street was generally referred to as "'Rastus Beadle's Mint".

The reading public was quick to realize that Mr. Beadle's handy little volumes were treasure-chests of adventure and high heroism. Free from text-book piety, yet strictly moral, they extolled the actions and character of representative American heroes and patriots. Here at last the deeds of Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, Davy Crockett and Sam Houston found able, exciting eulogy. Crime and moral turpitude, which were later to fleck the deteriorated half-dimes with a yellow rash, found no place in the first volumes of Beadleiana. It is probably no exaggeration to say that much of our pioneer nationalism, hitherto inarticulate, found its first utterance in the dime chronicles published by Erastus Beadle.

No one can say what would have happened to the firm of Beadle and Adams (Adams was a more or less silent partner for many years) if the Civil War had not followed hard upon their entrance into the publishing field. It seems likely that Beadle would have prospered, anyway, but it is also a fact that the war stimulated the sale of the new dime novels greatly. The government shipped them by the carload to Northern armies, and the Beadle Books came to be regarded as regulation equipment. They were devoured around camp-fires, swapped until they were worn to shreds and finally were passed on to Confederate soldiers for rum or tobacco during the fraternizing that went on during a long encampment. For a while, everyone was reading the yellow-backed Beadle Books. President Lincoln declared *Maum Guinea,* a dime epic of plantation life, to be "every bit as absorbing as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*". Henry Ward Beecher, in an anti-slavery oration, declared *Maum Guinea* to be "a shot in the right direction". Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, came into a Cabinet meeting waving a copy of *Seth Jones* in unconcealed delight. Many of the Beadle anti-slavery tales were widely disseminated in England as northern propaganda. Until 1886, Beadle republished all his titles at 44 Paternoster Row, London, using the American plates but providing his British readers with special covers and title pages. Quite literally, the dime novel was girdling the English-speaking world!

Having set his dime Juggernaut in motion, Beadle confined himself to the business end of the venture, permitting Editor Victor to exercise a free hand in the literary department and it was largely due to Victor's acumen and high literary judgment that the Beadle Books were so phenomenally successful. Victor was himself an accomplished writer, a leading contributor to *Graham's Magazine,* and a journalist of wide experience. Victor's *Address to the English People* was a dignified appeal for British support which had considerable currency during the Civil War. The general editor of the Beadle Library also wrote a memorial life of Lincoln, a creditable and informative work, despite the haste in which it was prepared for

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BEADLE'S HALF DIME Library

$6.50 a year. Entered at the Post Office as New York, N. Y., as Second Class Mail Rates. Copyright, 1880, by BEADLE AND ADAMS. February 17, 1880.

Vol. XVI. Single Number. PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS, No. 98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK. Price, 5 Cents. No. 395.

JOE GAVE ANOTHER WHOOP, AND TURNING HIS HORSE, YELLED AS HE SHOT AHEAD: "NOW DUTS, BOOT HOG OR DIE!"

California Joe's War Trail;

OR,

THE MINNESOTA MASSACRE.

A Sequel to "California Joe's First Trail."

BY CAPT. FRED. WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF "THE SEA-CAT," "THE DUMB PAGE," "THE TIGER TAMER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

THE plains of the Northwest stretched abroad, monotonous and smooth, carpeted with short grass, of a greenish gray, fading away into a dusty brown, as the hot sun scorched it into dry tufts, that looked as if they could tempt the appetite of no animal.

A BEADLE TITLE-PAGE, FROM THE UNIQUE COLLECTION OF DR. FRANK J. O'BRIEN

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the press. It was Victor who held the dime books up to a consistent level of quality by rigorously editing everything that appeared under the Beadle imprint. "As editor," he wrote to Mr. Charles Harvey many years afterward, "I sought the best work of the best writers. I laid down strict rules of morality, probability and action that all Beadle authors were bound to observe. American frontier life at that time was a colorful arena of warring Indian tribes and white settlers. . . . . We tried to get the flavor of American life into the dime pocket library, and I think we succeeded in doing so."

To ensure that "flavor of American life" which he himself prized so highly, Erastus Beadle took long journeys through the West, engaging the foremost Indian scouts, trappers, and explorers to write their reminiscences and retail their adventures for Beadle readers. He wanted to secure first-hand accounts of the great western *epos* that was being enacted across the Mississippi, and he preferred to have those accounts written by men whose contact with frontier life was immediate and personal. Needless to say, Beadle succeeded in sewing up the best two-gun writers of the period—Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) and his biographer, Colonel Prentiss Ingraham, being two of his richest finds. Among other regular contributors to the Beadle series were Captain "Bruin" Adams, Mayne Reid, later a friend of Ambrose Bierce, Major Sam Hall (Buckskin Sam), Oll Coombes (who possessed a ghoulish imagination and a demon pen), Captain Fred Whittaker and scores of others whose names mean nothing to contemporary letters, but whose every sentence was breathlessly awaited by a far-flung Beadle audience.

But probably the greatest of Beadle authors was Edward S. Ellis—who eventually found his way into *Who's Who*—the author of some hundreds of "dimes" and the worthy biographer of Pontiac, Tecumseh and Daniel Boone. But although his mature achievements were brilliant, Ellis's first work was his best. At the age of eighteen he walked in from New Jersey to present a neatly written manuscript entitled *Seth Jones* to Mr. Victor. That editor nearly collapsed with joy when he finished reading "the perfect dime novel", a story of post-Revolutionary life in northern New York. Within a year 450,000 copies of *Seth Jones* had been bought by avid readers; since that time the work has gone into countless editions and has been translated into seven foreign languages. Ellis wrote many another popular favorite, of which *Oonomoo the Huron* and the *Life of David Crockett* are best known. But he could no more duplicate *Seth Jones* than R. L. Stevenson could produce another *Treasure Island*.

The titles of the early Beadle novels have some literary dignity. Since they were based chiefly on historic deeds or personages, there was little cause for hectic titling. But later authors tried to combine gory suspense and alliteration with an appositional sub-title describing the character or occupation of the hero. Thus we get such titles as *Derring Deck, the Man with the Drop; Big Benson, the Brazos Bombshell; Topnotch Tim, the Mad Parson; Ray-Bold, the Rattling Ranger,* and *Old Sledge, the Blacksmith Detective.* Sometimes the titles were briefer but no less harrowing. *The Demon Doctor, The Skeleton Schooner* and *The White Scalper* are specimens of later, more degenerate, titles that took the place of authentic Wild West adventure yarns after 1870. But at all times a good title had to be a stabbing, brain-searing spark which illuminated much, yet hinted at a universe of terror and daring between the covers. When one considers that some of the dime *feuilletonists* wrote upwards of a thousand volumes one realizes that their titling talents had to be fairly well-developed. A plot could be worked and reworked, but a title had to sizzle like a bar of freshly heated iron plunged into the cool springs of originality. Nothing lukewarm, you understand, nothing jaded, repetitive,

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juiceless. Is it any wonder that Prentiss Ingraham wrote to a friend in 1895, "Have just completed the fifteenth of my 'Pony Express' series. Clipped it off easily in three days last week—*but I'll be congenitally damned if I know what to call it!*"

II

The decade between 1860-70 saw the firm of Beadle and Adams scale the dizzy pinnacles of publishing prosperity; the succeeding decades witnessed its decline and fall. The major contributing causes, which finally brought about the *débâcle* in 1897, were the rise of cheap competition and the disappearance of the West as a source of literary material. So long as Beadle held the field alone, he could dictate (through Victor) the type and quality of story which his authors must write. These, as we have seen, were chiefly tales of derring-do with an authentic American background of hardy life on the western frontier. But inevitably the success of these cheaply printed volumes aroused the envy of competitors. Beadle's own bookkeeper, George Munro, aspired to deposit in his own name the millions of dollars he was handling for his employer. Finally Munro left Beadle's employ in 1866 and, in partnership with Irwin Beadle, set up a dime plant of his own. Munro's long training under Erastus Beadle qualified him to publish *Munro's Ten Cent Library,* and *Fireside Companion* with conspicuous success for many years. One of Munro's greatest successes was the "Old Cap Collier" stories, a semi-weekly series started in 1883, which continued till Munro retired in 1890 with a fortune of ten million dollars!

Other competitors had meanwhile leapt into the race. In 1867 Robert DeWitt produced a close *external* imitation of the yellow-backed Beadle originals, but failed to fill his volumes with the high quality of material that Beadle regularly secured. Even a dime novel reading audience could tell the difference and after a few years DeWitt ceased publication. Sinclair Tousey of New York began to publish Civil War tales in 1864, and ran through several years of successful publication. In Boston, the firm of Elliot, Thomes and Talbot put out some small blue books of adventure and exploration in foreign lands. But for many years Beadle's most serious competitor was Frank Starr of 41 Platt Street. Starr's *American Novels* were usually about one hundred pages long, and contained the work of well known dime novelists such as E. S. Ellis, Bracebridge Hemyng, and Joseph Badger. Recent investigation proves that "Frank Starr" was a foreman in Beadle's shop and that his publishing address was merely the back door of the Beadle plant at 141 William Street. Beadle's competitors, not suspecting such chicanery on the part of the Old Master, must have hugged themselves in ecstasy when they saw the Frank Starr novels slowly crowding the Beadle books off the newsstands.

After 1870 Erastus Beadle began to publish his novels with multi-colored illustrated covers and title-page drawings done in black and white. Many of the later novels carried hand-painted covers in a variety of pleasing colors, tastefully applied. As specimens of cheap book-making, the Beadle volumes of 1870-1875 rank as pedestrian masterpieces, much too good for the fate that overtook them. Because they were as common as grass and as cheap as gravel, no one took the trouble consciously to preserve them. Old copies cluttered a million attics until they were swept into the furnace or sold for baled paper. Today, with a genuine Beadle book as rare as a homing pigeon, we owe such specimens of *Beadleiana* as we possess to the efforts of Dr. Frank P. O'Brien, who has devoted many years of his life and much of his substance to collecting the almost extinct species of dime literature. He has donated his collection to the New York Public Library, and it is from an examination of this collection that we obtained most of our present information.

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III

As long as there was a Wild West to celebrate, Beadle was secure in his domination of the dime novel market. But when railroad systems began to checker the prairies with steel and every rude frontier hamlet commenced to take on the aspect of a populous city the old cowboy and Indian life vanished. Trappers and scouts became as rare as the herds of bison that once swarmed the prairies; finally they disappeared altogether and both the authors and publishers of dime novels were forced to tap new veins of literary material. Train robbers, hold-up men and super-sleuths supplanted the more wholesome heroes of pioneer life; the criminal exploits of Hard-Case Harry and the James Brothers were chronicled with all the gusto and imagination that had formerly gone into the history of Daniel Boone's explorations. It became apparent also that the youth of Kansas and points west were as eager to read of life in New York City as the metropolitan lads were to trace the adventures of Buffalo Bill. Accordingly, shoals of "half-dimes", emanating from cheap competitive plants and purporting to convey the true flavor of Broadway, Bowery and Chinatown life, washed over the parched readers of the Middle West. Beadle had no recourse but to meet this competition by reducing the price of his own books and by diluting them with cheaper material. The titles of dime novels after 1875 show what happened. *Broadway Billy's Boodle, Broadway Billy in Clover* and their like chronicled the fortunes of a New York City gamin created by Oll Coombes. *The Wall Street Blood* and *Cool Colorado in New York* were yarns of metropolitan life spun by that master craftsman, A. W. Aiken. With card-sharps and gum-shoe men taking the place of healthier outdoor heroes, the whole texture of the dime novel became shoddy and disreputable. Thereafter, the expression, "dime novel", began to have opprobrious connotations and many a paterfamilias who as a boy had read Beadle books beneath the evening lamp now thwacked his offspring for reading them in the woodshed. Still, there was money in them, and hordes of imitators rushed in to gather the nickel-and-dime harvest. Lower and lower sank the once heroic yellow-backs, until neither Beadle nor Victor could tolerate the indignity of meeting such competition. Finally in 1889, after nearly thirty years of successful publishing, Erastus Beadle closed his doors, and a great influence upon American literature came to an official end. Eight years later, in 1897, Beadle passed away at the age of sixty-five.

Appleton's Biographical Dictionary, that gazetteer of the dim decades between Grant and Garfield, that illustrated *Who Was Who* among whiskered generals and ghostly bishops, has managed to omit the name of Erastus Beadle. And a diligent search among the reviews and critical periodicals of his age will reveal only one or two literary references to his works. But it is doubtful whether any single figure in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century exerted a more powerful or direct influence upon the reading habits of a nation. He stimulated an interest in the heroes of American life; in his books he celebrated the epic glory of the pioneer struggle for existence. He brought literature out of the fluffy boudoir and stuffy school-room; he released it from the heavy irons of pulpit oppression.

In scope and variety few publishers of any age can offer a catalogue comparable to Erastus Beadle's. He resurrected and preserved the songs, stories, jokes, games, ballads and manners of an earlier age, immortalizing the names and deeds of America's buckskin heroes. By inventing the dime novel he made reading a passionate, extra-curriculum activity—and in the roll of difficult accomplishments this feat deserves a sentence or two of grateful acknowledgment.

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IS TEACHING A NARCOTIC?

by Charles A. Bennett

THE Learned Man has always been a fair mark for the shafts of ridicule. Do we not recall, and can we not picture, that Thracian servant-girl—hands on quaking hips and mouth open in a loud guffaw at the sight of the absent-minded philosopher stumbling into a well? She stands for the enlightened masses, the vast hordes of sensible people, in every age. And Aristophanes, when he wanted to get a laugh from the groundlings, did he not represent Socrates suspended aloft in a basket, fooling about with the higher mysteries? As who should say, "There's your professor for you! No stout fellow, this, with both feet on the ground, but a cloud-gazer, 'way up in the air". In our own day the tradition survives chiefly among the artists of the comic strip and the writers of humorous stories for popular consumption. Here the college professor is presented either as a fatuously absent-minded patriarch with a long white beard, or as a cheerful idiot in horn-rimmed spectacles hot in pursuit of a butterfly. A silly old thing, wasting his time on insects or flowers or abstract metaphysics or other trivial and unreal subjects. No wonder he holds a conspicuous place on every professional swindler's classified list of Suckers.

Yet I think I can detect a note of envy behind this scorn for the professorial mind and its interests. I am often struck with the timidity, amounting almost to awe, with which the non-academic person contemplates coming into the academic presence. "Don't tell me I have to sit next to Professor So-and-So! Good Heavens! What am I to say to him? He will use long words I don't understand and talk miles above my head." The victim, you see, is made acutely aware of his (or her) ignorance when confronted by the learned man's easy command of the profundities. He (or she) feels "consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy". How to get rid of this feeling? Well, there is the ancient device of sour grapes. Why should not the relatively unlettered ones agree to dismiss the profundities as trivialities or vain subtleties? This is their "secret revenge", the tacit conspiracy to pillory the professor. "The rupture of the link between dull people," said George Meredith, "consisting in the fraternal agreement that something is too clever for them, and a shot beyond them, is not to be thought of lightly." True; and we would not rob them of their peace of mind for anything, but one may continue to suspect that the sourness of the grapes has not been proved.

In recent years the critics of the professor have been forced to take a different line. The old charge that he led a cloistered existence and was out of touch with life was too flagrantly in contradiction with the facts. When the nations went to war they discovered that the help of the professors was essential—not only that of the scientists, but of the legal and literary pundits, of the histo-

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rians, the economists and the philosophers. These emerged in thousands from their academic seclusion and proved themselves highly efficient. Whether they were out of touch with life or not, at least they showed that they were in touch with death. (But this is a distinction that need not be labored against them, since it was one their critics did not make.) And even before the war both the ideal and the type of the college professor had undergone such a radical transformation, in the United States at least, that the traditional caricature had become antiquated. What Santayana wrote of the professors of philosophy was and remains true of nearly all. "Many of the younger professors of philosophy are no longer the sort of persons who might as well have been clergymen or schoolmasters: they have rather the type of mind of a doctor, an engineer, or a social reformer; the wide-awake young man who can do most things better than old people, and who knows it." They are brisk, they are busy, they are efficient, they are informed about, and wise in, the ways of life as it is lived "outside". They seem to understand the mysteries of the stock market, of real estate, blue-prints, golf, politics and automobiles, fully as well as the children of this world.

No. The charge of otherworldliness and general senile absent-mindedness cannot stand. In fact, there are many who believe that the colleges and universities are not unworldly enough. Instead of being places of seclusion and of quietness where simplicity of life prevails and some attempt is made to preserve and impart a humane and cultivated taste, they are tending to reproduce on a small scale the world of affairs, with its competitive passions, its straining ambitions, its complex round of activities and its confused standards. It would be better for teachers and taught if they deserved the epithet "monastic". But that jibe is antiquated and so the criticism has been changed. The sin of the professors nowadays, we are told, is pedantry and dullness. Let any subject be exposed to the academic mind and, no matter how palpitant with life it may be, it will perish from asphyxiation. Give the professor a topic in biography or history or literary criticism or philosophy and he will crawl all over it "like a myopic ant", laboring with grains of dust, making Herculean conflicts with blades of grass and tumbling into tiny fissures, but he will never see the thing in its simple and satisfying and obvious entirety. He will produce a monument of learning, richly documented and encrusted with footnotes. But who cares about monuments? Let the dead bury their dead.

And so I am assured by those who find this sort of thing persuasive that we college professors are a dull lot, that our mental life is passed in a sort of barbed-wire entanglement of unprofitable distinctions. And I know of young men who have been warned against taking up teaching as a career because it will chill their enthusiasm, dull their intellect, and spoil their freshness of sense and imagination.

This dreary picture, like the caricatures of the absent-minded professor, seems to me distorted. The conventional jibes miss both the drawbacks and the attractions of the academic life. And I am so weary of the outsider's blend of mockery and scorn that I propose to set him right on a few points.

At the outset one must distinguish between the effects of teaching and the effects of research. I begin with the latter. And I assert at once that there is no necessary connection between research and dullness. Of course if, in order to be a scholar, you have to keep on exhuming the works of happily forgotten authors or discovering utterly useless facts because thus alone can you be scientific and "make a contribution to knowledge", then the climate of your mind will be far from bracing. But that is not the true ideal of scholarship. To a view less narrow and prejudiced that ideal is thoroughness: to stake out some small plot where for ourselves we

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can get down to the original sources or the original data upon which our judgment rests, so that we not only know or believe but can give the grounds of our knowledge and the reasons for the faith that is in us. It is a fine ideal—nothing less than that of possessing our own minds. And it has a saving virtue, for in those hours when we feel dismayed at our ignorance and superficiality, when we exclaim, "Why wasn't I properly educated!" it must be a great consolation, I imagine, to reflect, "Well, at any rate there is one small part of the great field of knowledge where I *do* know something and know it thoroughly".

But the pursuit of the ideal has its dangers. It tends to produce a habit of intellectual caution that is almost morbid. Under its influence one tries to inspect all sides of a question; one is tempted to postpone decision until the evidence is all in. You see it at work in faculty meetings and academic committees where everyone is struggling to get down to first principles—and meanwhile nothing is being done. At such times one longs, if not for a dictator, at least for something impulsive or frankly experimental. Here, too, one understands why the books written by professors are so often uninteresting. We must be sure of our authorities; we must multiply definitions; we must protect ourselves with qualifications and reservations. And so we may miss the truth which the slapdash method—known to its advocates as "humanizing knowledge"—often attains. As a friend of mine puts it, "You may sometimes be more successful in hitting the bull's-eye with a sponge than with a dart. It is true that the sponge hits more than the bull's-eye, but it does hit the bull's-eye". And yet scholarship must stick to its darts. For when it succeeds by its own proper methods it produces those rare and perfect works in which art and truth, science and imagination are met together. Gilbert Murray's *Rise of the Greek Epic* and John Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu* are examples of the thing I have in mind. Here the results of the most scrupulous and devoted scholarship have been so interpreted as to make even the uninstructed reader tingle with pleasure and excitement.

The problems and dangers of teaching are another story. The instructor in an American college today has to lecture too often and on too many themes. You cannot give from nine to twelve lectures a week on, say, four different subjects without feeling that you are dissipating your mental energy. Thus you are continually plagued by the thought that what you are giving out is superficial and ill-digested. Your lectures are not the fruit of meditation and mature knowledge: they are something you "get up" under artificial pressure. Moreover, if you are a teacher you have to do more than teach: you have to sit on committees. In colleges and universities committees are spawned hourly. Why? Because we are perpetually tinkering with the works, indulging in an endless orgy of self-improvement. Sometimes it strikes me as a feverish idealism, sometimes merely as a bad case of the itch. In any event committee-meetings and faculty meetings cut into one's time and enhance the general feeling of hurry. Add to this the fact that you are eager for promotion and that in order to be promoted you must publish something, whether you are ready to publish or not, and it becomes clear that the teacher's chief obstacle under modern conditions is the general atmosphere of strain and restlessness in which his life is passed. The trouble is not that teachers grow pedantic or unworldly but that, goaded by too many demands, they become distracted and are left without any quiet place in the mind.

And yet there does remain a certain danger of stagnation. It is not good for any man to be required to lecture week after week and year after year to students whose minds are untrained or who are not convinced that what one has to say to them is of any impor-

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tance. If one dealt with them in small groups one's judgment might be different, but the democratic clamor for education forces us to teach the young in droves, and so the impression remains of an audience willing and receptive enough, but on the whole uncritical. In such conditions there are too little tonic and too little challenge. One is tempted to pass off inferior stuff because it seems in the long run to prove as palatable as one's better work. Why try to do better when the undergraduate will not know the difference? And so you tidy up the subject-matter of your course, divide it up into neat little packages and hand out a package a day to the undergraduate, who at examination time hands you back such fragments as he has been able desperately to salvage at the last hour. All of which means that teaching has become the routine distribution of a commodity and that you have ceased to think in any living sense about your subject.

I have mentioned only a few of what I may call the intellectual hazards of the academic life. Yet if I were to enumerate them all I should not believe that I had drawn up any peculiar indictment. The argument would merely tend to show that the career of the college teacher, like any professional career, has its own special dangers and problems—difficulties which an intelligent man can in part discount if he be prepared for them in advance. Any career seriously undertaken threatens to narrow the range of one's interests, to diminish the scope of one's sympathy, and to make one the victim of routine. The member of a college faculty is not immune. But I cannot see why he should be specially selected as a target for criticism. As a matter of fact, in a comparison of careers in this respect the contrast is all in favor of the academic, for here the danger of mental staleness that besets every specialist is not so great. As a member of a faculty you count among your friends men of the most diverse intellectual interests. Of the details and the technicalities of their subjects you may know little or nothing, but the contact with men of different temperament, training and ideas from your own is at once a warning against narrow mindedness and a constant source of intellectual refreshment.

Here, I think, lies the permanent attraction of the college teacher's career. It offers an opportunity of living in a community where people are interested in ideas, in an atmosphere where one can feel the stir and the movement of the currents of thought of one's time. To be shut off from this is a sort of death. This may seem a hard saying, but those members of my profession who have had to spend two or three months at a "summer resort", or whom circumstance has exiled for any length of time to some spot where books, libraries and an interest in ideas are alike undiscoverable, will know what I mean. Of course, if you are the sort of person who likes to be busy, or at least to feel busy, about many things; if you enjoy travelling, rubbing up against all sorts and conditions of men, making money, putting over deals and joining societies; if being in touch with life means being continually subject to a rain of new and chaotic impressions, then the academic life will naturally seem to you a dismal backwater or a mud-flat encumbered with professional hulks that once were men. But this only means that persons of such temperament should not contemplate becoming teachers, that the Lord has endowed mankind with a diversity of tastes and vocations and that one man's meat is another man's poison. The professor, after all, is only following his vocation. He has his limitations and his vicissitudes. Why should the lay world vilify him with abuse, above all with ignorant abuse? "Let us be civilized," exclaims Santayana somewhere, "let us live in the mind." I know of few places that offer a better opportunity than a college faculty.

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PROGRESS IN ARCADIA

by Cyril Hume

THERE was once a king in Hellas, and he was miserable. For although he was surfeited in his palace with possessions, he owned nothing he really cared for. We shall for convenience call him Orestes, though, for myself and in spite of the historians (those pertinacious moles), I believe him to have been Alexander, Son of Zeus, King of Macedon and Lord of the World. In fact, certain of the records which I have studiously consulted refer to him indifferently as Orestes, Prometheus and, actually, Alexander. But, no matter what his true name, he was truly miserable. That is clear even in Greek—a language with which I am, by the way, totally unacquainted. This Orestes had arrived at such a state of melancholy that he was intolerable company both for himself and for those slaves, his friends, whom he used modestly to describe as the Companions of Zeus. There was no pleasing him at all. He complained from morning to night in a shrill impatient voice that his palace was less reprehensibly intricate than that of King Minos at Cnossus and that there were no minotaurs in his stable, that none of his musicians could compare with Orpheus and none of his athletes with Herakles, that none of his generals, with the exception of himself alone, could hold a candle to Odysseus or Agamemnon. And he went on in this vein through a thousand classical allusions (which to recount would strain my scholarship to the cracking point and entirely bewilder the reader) until he had reduced the Companions of Zeus to what can only be described as A State of Mind. "Next thing we know," they said to each other, "he'll be trying if any of his executioners are as efficient as Pyrrhus." "You'll see!" they said. Finally one of them faced this emergency which was like a toothache to them all, and so best ended at any cost. "Zeus-begotten," he said to Orestes, "since the world falls so far short of your demands, why ever don't you make it over?"

Orestes fell to fingering his short, yellow beard at that, and for a long time he stared at the speaker with serious abstracted eyes. He muttered finally, "Of course, I might need a little help". And after another while of musing, he jumped up and sent in a hurry for his philosophers.

When the philosophers had come and the indignant barking of the palace dogs had been quieted, Orestes allowed the philosophers five minutes to perform all those quaint little eccentricities which distinguish all philosophers and tragedians. And when everyone had admired the childlike wisdom of those untidy men for five minutes more Orestes spoke. "Philosophers, Companions of Zeus," he said, "I am thinking seriously of building a city whose like has never been seen in the world before. In short, a Perfect City. And I want a few candid opinions. . . . Now, you, Diogenes, what do you think of my idea?"

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Diogenes advanced with his usual sturdy independence and, when he was within garlicking distance of Orestes, shouted very loudly, "Shut up!" Whereupon all the court scribes recorded the fact that in his wisdom Diogenes had told the king to shut up, and there was a lesson for you, and what a man Diogenes was! Diogenes swaggered back to his tub, scattering vermin as he went, and all the Companions of Zeus gathered up the vermin as souvenirs of the surpassing wisdom of Diogenes. And they cherished these little creatures so assiduously that the very breed flourishes in Greece to this day.

"That," said Orestes with an embarrassed cough, when Diogenes had disappeared into his tub, "is what Diogenes thinks. And let that be a lesson to all of you. . . . Now, you, Socrates, what do you think of my idea of building a perfect city?"

Socrates rose up like an old ape among the pretty boys who surrounded him, and he answered, "I think, Orestes, before you go building any perfect cities you might better devote a little time to perfecting yourself. There's Pride, Orestes, and there's Sloth. There's Gluttony and, Orestes, there's ——"

"Yes, yes!" Orestes agreed quickly.

"And since you've asked for it, Orestes, I can only say that charity begins at home."

Then all the scribes wrote down quickly in large letters that Socrates had said charity began at home, and many of them made marginal notes that they must repeat that saying at the earliest opportunity to their wives.

When the shrill applause of the young friends of Socrates had died away, Orestes coughed again. "That," he said, "is what Socrates thinks. And I want all of you to remember that even a king is not immune to the rebukes of virtue. . . . Now, you, Aristotle, what do you think?"

Aristotle rose, arranging his robes, for he was a great one for robes. He removed a throat lozenge from his tongue with his thumb and index finger and held it glistening toward Orestes in an admonitory gesture. He smiled blandly. "First," he said, "Orestes, before I answer your question, I must ask you to make a little clearer what you mean by *perfect*. For unless I know that I might go wasting my time and your time—which I am sure is very valuable, Orestes—in talking about something which has nothing to do with your question at all. So suppose, Orestes, we state exactly what you do mean. You meant, did you not?—and stop me if I am mistaken—that you wished to build—or was it *construct,* for there is a world of difference, Orestes—build?—you wished, then, to build a perfect city. Am I right, Orestes, in thinking that is what you meant?"

"Aristotle!" Orestes cried, "that's exactly what I've been trying to say all along! . . . You *see* now, everybody!"

Aristotle pursed his lips and cocked his head and tried to look puzzled (a thing he never was). "Perfect," he said. "Humm!" Then he went on smiling more blandly than ever, for Aristotle considered blandness an attribute of Zeus. "Well, now, my friend, before we shall be able to examine the rightness, the praiseworthiness, the—if I may say so—*worth* of your wish, we must first discover what you mean by *perfect city*. Otherwise, we might find ourselves arguing about quite different things. If by *perfect* you mean finished, consummated, complete in every part which makes a city, perfect in *that* sense, then we must further inquire what it is, what quality, what *citiness,* if I may coin a phrase ——"

"Citiness!" gasped the scribes, scribbling. "Oh, Gods!"

"—— what citiness it is which makes a city and, then, if having achieved this citiness, this perfection or complete presence, rather, of all the possible urban qualities of citiness, if, I say, we have achieved that, we shall also have achieved your wish, your Perfect City. Am I transpicuous, Orestes?"

"Oh, quite!" Orestes answered heartily.

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"As anything! . . . Scribes, make a note of that point. . . . However, Aristotle, I wasn't exactly thinking——"

"Of course not!" Aristotle answered with a playful smile. "Now, then, Orestes, before we go further, we must, for the sake of clarity (which I reverence equally with the Gods) consider various other aspects of the term, *perfection,* and so possibly arrive at the particular meaning in which you conceive it. Otherwise, with my humble abilities, I might not be able to answer your question at all."

"Do try, Aristotle!" Orestes urged.

"Now, then," Aristotle continued, "in a larger sense, in, actually, a higher sense unless I am wrong—in which case I hope someone here will be good enough to correct me—in a spiritual sense, in an allusive sense and, hence, curiously, in a more common sense and, I think, the sense in which our Royal Friend originally intended to employ the word, *perfection.* Perfection is that quality of existing without blemish, of being the best, highest or most complete or, specifically, complete in moral or esthetic excellence. If, then, it is in this sense we are to employ the word, *perfection,* as contrasted with its more literal, primary sense, we must begin at very different premises and, hence, arrive at very different conclusions——"

Aristotle developed this idea at some length and, when the moon rose over the dark Ægean and Aristotle concluded his peroration with the words, "And, now, Orestes, I hope I have answered you", there was no sound in the audience chamber but that of peaceful breathing and the voice of Orestes murmuring in his sleep, "How soothing is Divine Philosophy!"

In the morning when everyone had taken his night's rest, except the younger men who need rest no more than cats anyway, Orestes made a short speech. Now that the greatest minds of the age had so heartily approved his scheme, he said, he felt he was justified in going ahead and building his Perfect City. And he hoped—in fact, he knew—that everyone would get together behind the idea and make a big success of it as only Greeks knew how to do. Then everybody clapped and cheered at seeing Orestes in so good a humor now that he had thought of something which he did not actually possess. And everybody told everybody else that this Perfect City idea was a big idea, and it took a big man like Orestes to have an idea like that. And Aristotle said it would not surprise him to see an ideal state in existence now, after all. Even Socrates conceded that living in a perfect city might be one way of arriving at personal perfection, though there was a fallacy there which he must in conscience distinguish. And when Diogenes obstinately said, "Give me my good old tub!" everyone thought Diogenes was getting to be an old bore anyway.

In short, there was a great amount of talk about the Perfect City and, when Orestes said that the city would not only be perfect but would also be a symbol of Human Progress, everyone went quite wild with enthusiasm and said there had never been such a splendid idea before. And they said it all in Greek.

Orestes and his philosophers agreed that the first thing they must do was to select a site for their Perfect City. Accordingly, Orestes made a proclamation throughout all Greece, inviting ambassadors to come from every country in the Peninsula and plead the claims of their lands for beauty and salubrity against the ambassadors of other nations. On the appointed day ambassadors came. They came from Ætolia, Epirus, Thessaly, Magnesia, Macedonia, Locris, Eubœa, Malis, Aenonia, Elis, Doris, Aeniania, Phocis, Achaia, Bœotia, Attica, Acarnania, Argolis, Messenia and Laconia. They came even from far Chalcidice, from the seagirt Cyclades and from small Oetaea. They were all very convincing. Even the Laconians were loquacious. When the ambassadors had gone through their arguments for the third time and could think of nothing new to

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boast about, Orestes announced that the Perfect City would be established in Arcadia, the only country which had sent no ambassador at all, the Arcadians having decided, if Orestes didn't know without being persuaded that Arcadia was by far the loveliest country in Greece, it would be hopeless to argue with such a fellow anyway. This had convinced Orestes and his philosophers, too.

The next task was the selection of inhabitants for the Perfect City. This Orestes did very carefully, for he said that no one in his city must be aged or ill or useless. And after long deliberation he chose out of all Greece and the outlying islands five thousand young men and five thousand young women. Some of these could sing and some could dance. Some were excellent sculptors or musicians. Some were poets. Some were deft workers in precious stones and metals. Some were architects. Some were great breeders and trainers of horses, and some were preëminent for their knowledge of husbandry. Many were famous fighters in the lands from which they had been chosen, and some had won the crown and palm in the pentathlon. All of them were strong and pleasant-mannered and beautiful and all could work.

When these thousands had been assembled they followed after Orestes and his philosophers, who were the only old or ugly people in that company. So they passed, singing, through Greece until they came to that Arcadian valley which Orestes had chosen. Here they pitched their tents. . . . There are records still in Greece of that delightful journey. Now and then a farmer in Achaia will turn up a shard at his ploughing and, brushing away the mould with his rough fingers, will look long with an emotion as dear and painful as first love at the treasure he has found, with brede of marble men and maidens overwrought. . . .

During the first year, as Orestes and his philosophers had foreseen, the few thousands did no work at all. Among the beautiful and joyous comrades they had discovered, they were far too happy to dream of working. So for a year they lived content and idle in their many colored tents. And for a year they feasted, laughing at the merry tales of the minstrels and weeping over the sad songs which are sung when wine is poured. Sometimes they held athletic games so that the young men might compete for the crown of olive, and one win it with his surpassing strength and beauty. Or else they arranged ceremonial dances, that the girls might be crowned also for their beauty and their grace. But, most, they gave their time to love-making. The Spartan men sought out the blonde Athenian girls who struck their large hearts dumb with reverence and desire. The lithe Athenian men followed merrily after the tall women of Laconia and Argolis who, they swore, were like oreads in their majesty or, else, like the women of the Golden Age whom even the gods had loved. And the Laconian women, ox-eyed and gracious, thought that not even the gods could be so wise as their Athenian lovers and not even Eros half so lovably exasperating. But the gay Athenian girls, weary beyond endurance of the subtle chatter they had heard among their brothers in the groves of the Academy, protested shrilly that the men of Sparta and Macedon were themselves the very gods, grave and mighty-limbed and not a little terrifying, but withal as tractable as Zeus bearing Europa overseas. So for a year the good sun shone through the tent walls, red as wine, or purple as Ægean waters, or white as snow in winter on Nymetius. And for a year that valley was more scandalous and happy than any other valley anywhere before or since, except the valleys of Elysium, maybe. Tipsy lovers kissed each other in the open day and at night they lay among the fragrances of asphodel, and turned their merry, wanton faces toward the cold moon, Artemis.

But when the year was over and the trumpets of Orestes sounded the signal long deferred, no one was sorry to be at work again.

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Love is not endurable forever. And when the year was run all the gay tents were blown and weathered, and all the wine was drunk. By that time, also, all the lovely, honey-colored girls had their adorable golden babies to be caring for and so less time for love. And by then the young men had begun to think scornfully of dalliance. "A man can't be forever tagging after the women," they told each other. "A man wants to be doing something. And whatever can Orestes be thinking of, leaving us to rot here in this effeminate sloth like a lot of Persians?" So when Orestes's trumpets at last sounded the signal to start work upon the Perfect City, the five thousand young men sent up a great, brazen roar of eagerness out of their bronze chests and the five thousand young women cheered suddenly with a shrill lifting sound like the chimes of many shaken tambourines. And even the five thousand babies leaped in their mothers' glorious arms and cried out also for an uncomprehended joy, with a soft, multitudinous sound like the calling of many doves and magpies.

And the trumpets of Orestes blared, "Begin!"

I shall not try to describe the perfect beauty of that city which Orestes's people built. I am too old by nearly a year to attempt the impossible. Let it be enough to say that while that city was building, Pan piped daily among the flocks of Arcadia and the pards of Bacchus played like kittens in the vineyards, and at Delphi the arc of Iris spanned the heavens for a year unbroken, and the bronze doors of Ares's temple at Thebes closed wonderfully with a thunderous clangor, though no man's hand was seen to touch them. Still more wonderful, perhaps, the artists and artisans who labored in that Perfect City so surpassed themselves in what they did, in fact, were so exalted in their common creation, that more than one was heard to praise a fellow's work.

When it was done it was a city only to be imagined by comparisons and instances. Its least temple was more glorious than the Parthenon. And all the girls who began their housekeeping there were so enchanted with the houses which their lovers had built for them that hardly one was jealous of the other houses which other lovers had built for other girls. . . . But, no, I cannot describe that city. Yet, if the reader loves small things which are beautiful, perhaps his imagination will do my work for me when I tell him that every tree, planted for shade along those marble esplanades, was selected out of an entire forest as the most perfect of its kind; that flamingos and peacocks flew in great companies up out of Africa, to display themselves beside the city's fountains, and that the curb of every least gutter in that city was the masterpiece of a great sculptor. Perhaps I can best suggest the beauty of this city of Orestes, as well as the gentleness which it distilled in the hearts of its inhabitants, by repeating the bare and historically authenticated facts that, when it was finished, he was content with an actual possession for the first time in his career; when it was finished Socrates crowned himself with parsley to make a child laugh and Aristotle wept and quoted Sappho, saying, "O, Kala! O, Kariessa!" And even Diogenes crawled out of his tub.

Orestes smiled when he saw the sunlight glinting upon the ragged white head of Diogenes and he felt happier than ever because of the great tribute of kindliness in the old man's face. He took counsel with himself, "Surely a sight which has brought Diogenes out of his firkin must have brought out everyone except the dead and women in labor, and it is time for me to speak". So he beckoned Milo of Crotona who always accompanied him in the dress of Herakles, under the honorable title of the Strong Companion of Zeus. "Lift me up on your shield, Milo," Orestes said. And Milo was pleased, for he loved to show off his strength and he was never happier than when people whis-

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pered as he passed, "There goes Milo of Crotona who can carry a bull upon his back!" So Milo lifted Orestes up upon his shield and waited underneath as patient (as he said himself) as Atlas.

When the people nearest Orestes saw their lord raised above them like a smiling statue, they began to call for those further out to keep silent.

"My friends," Orestes began, "Companions of Zeus,"—and silence went out from him like rings upon the surface of stirred water, until the crowd was silent to its very edge. "Today the last scaffolding has been removed from the temple of Demeter, and our Perfect City is all but finished. One spot alone remains incomplete. One single jewel is still to be set in our city's diadem of beauty. Over the Gate of Phœbus and Artemis, the main port of entrance for all our friends of Greece, there is, as all of you have doubtless observed, an unfinished gap in the marble masonry. Here we must place some sculptured relief of beauty great enough to be a worthy crown for the city we have built. Under ordinary circumstances such a relief would logically depict some momentous event in the city's past, some peculiar instance of the benignity of some god toward our commonwealth. In discussing the matter with my eminent friends, Socrates and Aristotle, it became apparent that the single historical event we have yet to boast is simply the actual construction of the city, which, I am sure you will agree, requires no monument or, rather, is to itself a sufficient monument." [*Applause*]

"Having arrived at this conclusion, I was for some time at (if I may say so) a loss. But presently my profound friend, Socrates, expressed what I considered a characteristically sound opinion—that the proposed relief, in its subject and treatment, ought to express the spirit of our city, what our city stands for, what it shall through the centuries continue to stand for. Whereupon my scholarly friend, Aristotle, suggested that our city stands for nothing if not for Human Progress. Needless to say, after gravely considering the timely and honest doubts of my sober friend, Diogenes, I found myself in hearty accord with the opinions of both my eminent friends." [*Prolonged applause*]

"My dear friends," Orestes continued, smiling, "I am deeply gratified that my ideas fall in so perfectly with your own. However, before we congratulate ourselves too freely, there is still one point to be considered, namely, who is to execute this sculptured representation of Human Progress for us? When I propounded this problem to my eminent friends they agreed with me, after some reflection, that this were, perhaps, best decided by the eventualities of a competition. After further thought, having abandoned our original impulse which I am afraid was a provincial one (though a very natural one, too, I think), we came to feel that, unless we extended the competition beyond the confines of our own community, it might be said of us that our own sculptors required civic protection for their fame . . ." [*Laughter and applause*]

"So we have at last determined, subject, of course, to your consent, to proclaim this competition fearlessly through the entire world, letting our native artists compete with the rest, without favor or prejudice. So, unless anyone here has any objections to offer to this scheme to which we have devoted considerable anxious thought—" [*Cries of "No! None! Nonsense!"*] "—I shall be grateful if everyone will signify his assent to it by saying Aye." [*Loud and thunderous applause*]

"The Ayes have it!" [*Laughter and cheers*]

Orestes leaped down delightedly from Milo's shield, not even forgetting to say, "My dear Milo! How strong you are! I believe you could have borne me speaking all day!" Milo, missing the *bon mot,* looked at his feet and shuffled them. "Oh, well," he said, "I guess Herakles could have done the same thing."

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Orestes lost not a day in publishing his competition to the uttermost parts of the world. It was known from The Pillars of Herakles to far Colchis, and beyond Egypt to the Mountains of the Moon. The terms of the competition were these: the relief must be worked in a tablet of Pentelic marble seven cubits in width, its height to be less than its width according to the proportions of Corinth; it must represent Human Progress, and it must be delivered at the Gate of Phœbus and Artemis two years from the date of the proclamation of the competition. The winner would receive a crown of laurel and citizenship in the Perfect City, a thousand drachmae of gold and a bride of Cyprus.

The news of the competition was the cause of endless talk and controversy. Nearly every one backed a favorite sculptor with a month's income. Some said it would be too bad for an old fellow to win that Cyprian girl, while others answered that a Cyprian girl would make a young man of anybody. Or, else, they took the competition seriously. They declared it would be a walk-away for Praxiteles. The judges, they said, wouldn't dare award the prize to anyone else. But others said no. Myron had as good a chance as anyone, especially since Phidias might not compete at all, being so disgusted with the way the Athenian commissioners were going on about his work on the Parthenon. Still others sneered, "Myron!" They were willing to bet their heads that the winner would be Photon, the Armenian. Photon's workshop at Elephantium, they said, was like a king's palace in this country. Besides, he did that mannered Persian stuff and that was sure to win because there wasn't a board of judges in the country would dare admit they didn't like it. Still others only laughed and inquired, ever so slightly out of the corners of their mouths, if everyone didn't know that the competition was in the bag. For a while everybody talked and then everybody forgot. . . . And all over the world sculptors were at work among the marble shapes of their hopes and their misgivings, shapes which at night they left looming like ghosts in their dark workshops, only to encounter them again in sleep, as dreams which troubled them with doubts.

When the appointed day arrived, at last, everyone remembered the competition, and that morning early risers were amazed to see the numberless sculptors who thronged toward the Gate of Phœbus and Artemis with their exhibits. Excitement fled across the city like the shadow of a cloud, and the whole population hurried out to see the spectacle. It was a great sight, with the white road dust rising under the feet of men and animals and hanging like smoke in the sun. About the gate where a scaffolding and a dais for the judges had been erected, there pressed sculptors of every imaginable sort and some unimaginable ones. The truth is, sculptors are as hard to classify as cats and much more difficult to get along with. There were old sculptors and young sculptors, rich sculptors, attired in arrogance and fine cloaks, and sculptors so poor that their stringy bodies looked out like bundles of faggots through rents in their tatters. There were famous sculptors, also, and sometimes a voice cried suddenly in the crowd, "Phidias!" or, "There's Photon, the Armenian, with his elephants and his orientals!" But the great majority of the sculptors had never been seen before by anyone and so attracted little individual attention. For sculptors are no more distinguished-looking than any other class of men. Only the architects, who had come in supercilious curiosity, were a group apart, as easily identified as soldiers or courtesans. Each of these carried in his hand his professional measuring rod, with which he pointed out to his fellows the more glaring defects of the Perfect City and which between times he swung with a lofty air. But the sculptors themselves bore no marks at all to identify them, except their harsh eyelids and rough hands which were inconspicuous in the crowd. Of course, each of them was

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guiding his own tablet of Pentelic marble through the press as though that were the most precious thing in the world.

There were as many different means of transportation there as sculptors. Phidias had brought his tablet in a chariot drawn by four black horses which he drove himself, for he was a proud man. Myron's arrived in a fine chariot also, but Myron had not trusted himself with so valuable a charge and had employed a professional charioteer. Yet the crowd saw that Myron did not quite trust the hireling either—for when the chariot swayed he wailed prayers and curses until the professional was as savage as a bear. A scattering of laughter went up, for Myron was notorious for his forebodings, and at that the charioteer began cursing outright.

The tablet of Photon, the Armenian, arrived in a bale of papyrus upon the back of an elephant. Upon the back of another elephant, which was entirely gilded, rode Photon himself, looking down contemptuously upon the throng of sun-burned Greeks who cheered him rapturously. The tablet of Praxiteles, concerning which there had already been much speculation, came like a delicate Athenian lady in a litter which was borne by twelve of the Master's pupils. They had carried it cheerfully half the length of Greece, wearing garlands and singing joyful chants to celebrate this new beauty which their master had brought into the world. Praxiteles himself followed afoot behind the litter, a little gray man like a physician, very quiet and absent-minded. A shout went up when the crowd spied him, and Praxiteles peered eagerly for the wonder which had caused such an uproar. Then the crowd laughed in an immense shaken voice, calling his name louder than ever, and Praxiteles blushed and hunched his shoulders and began scolding one of his pupils, who only laughed at him and cheered him to his face. . . . But the majority of the sculptors were too poor for any state. Most of them, occasionally with a friend or a brother to lend a hand, arrived trundling their masterpieces before them in hand-barrows. As they reached the gate, some of them were weeping already with despondency because of the great names the crowd was yelling and all of them were sweating with fatigue and nervousness.

Inconspicuous among that multitude was a young man who had brought his work in an ox-cart, evidently from a distance for his oxen were weary, and he himself was gray to the waist with dust. He was a big young man, plainly a foreigner, with a sombre smile and a lion's fleece of tawny hair. No one took much notice of him, for no one knew him, and when the judges asked his name and nationality as he made formal entry of his work, he answered in a surly tone that they could call him the Sicilian if they wished. Yes, he had come a long way. When he addressed Orestes as "Zeus-begotten", he was seen to smile into his small golden beard.

It was a great show. Upon an ivory table before Orestes lay a laurel wreath, a scroll, the patent of citizenship, and a shining pile of gold. At the feet of Orestes, in a round, inviting attitude, sat the Cyprian girl, dressed as a bride, with a violet girdle and a crown of violets. A morsel which was like to prove a distraction from the competition itself. And Orestes was seen frequently to speak kindly to her. . . . A great show. The crowd roared and roared till all the sculptors were in anguish at the sound. "Wasn't I the fool," each of them was saying to himself, "to have come so far and to have hoped so much?" Many of the younger sculptors easily relinquished the dreams of victory and sudden fame and love, and of a future filled with an increasing power of creation. Sculptors whom, until now, misfortune had followed (deservedly or undeservedly—who could say?—but always bitterly) laughed bitterly once again and turned away. Many a ragged fellow there began computing the great expense he had

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been at to come and cursed himself for a gamester; and, though the applauding crowd never dreamed of such a thing, many a famous sculptor trembled also. Such said wearily to themselves, "Well, my luck's done now! People will realize what a bungler I really am when they see me in this company. And wasn't it strange they should have deceived themselves even as long as this! By all the Gods! Why did I come?" Hardly one but momently was sick at heart, and those fortunate enough to have friends with them were hurt and comforted by the compassion which they saw in their eyes. Only three of all the sculptors were unmoved: Photon, impassive as a madman upon his gilded elephant; and Praxiteles who was absorbed in admiration of a boy and girl he had caught kissing each other in the crowd; and the young Sicilian who was busy watering his oxen out of his wide straw hat.

The trumpets of Orestes shattered the uproar into stillness. The judges took their places upon the dais.

One by one, each of the heavy tablets was carried before the judges and either passed onward, as less worthy than its predecessor, or hoisted up with ropes into the position which its creator had intended it to occupy above the Gate of Phœbus and Artemis. Each one briefly held this position of honor, while the judges deliberated and the crowd expressed its opinion with cheers or hootings. And the heart of the sculptor whose tablet was lifted up was exalted also because of the cheering of the crowd. And his heart choked him until a nod of the judges replaced his tablet with a better one, when the crowd howled the defeated tablet into oblivion and the heart of the sculptor fell back heavily into that unexalted region which is its proper place. Then the sculptor would receive his work back from the judges tenderly and sorrowfully as though it had been a wounded child, each sculptor in turn acting according to his nature, grieving or mocking at the hopes he had cherished. Some left immediately. Others remained. These were plainly resentful. Out of them all only a few manifested any depression or amazement, as if trying honestly to feel that the decision of the judges had been just.

Sometimes a tablet would hold its place against a score that came to succeed it. Then the crowd would howl louder for each rival that went down defeated, because the crowd loves a victor only less than a new victor. Then, also, the sculptor's friends would begin congratulating him, and new friends would gather around him to enjoy a little of his glory. Always, in the end, at a grave nod from the judges, a new tablet would be lifted up to replace the old one and the crowd would howl twice as loud as ever. The sculptor, as he received back his work, would be divided between impatience with his friends who had tempted fortune too far with their premature congratulations and wonder at the host of blemishes he had discovered in his work during its little time of prominence. Maybe he would begin planning how he would avoid those blemishes in his next work and how next time he would infuse a little more of his mind's life into the marble. . . . So the tablets were lifted up, applauded for a while and finally handed down and forgotten with the fame of the men who had made them.

The first of the great sculptors whom the judges called to exhibit his work was Myron. And Myron was a nervous man. He trembled visibly as the workmen on the scaffold hauled upon their ropes. He asked a hundred assurances that the ropes were strong enough and called upon the gods to witness that the workmen were intending to let his masterpiece fall and shatter itself upon the pavement below. The crowd began to call bantering advice, but Myron paid no attention at all. He only burst into relieved weeping when his tablet was safely in place. Presently the crowd began cheering for Myron's work, which was a low relief with surfaces as clean and sharp as camellia petals.

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In it Myron had represented Psyche weeping before her mirror and, above her head, Zeus, as an eagle, swooping down upon her. The crowd roared that Myron had won, and Myron was the greatest sculptor in the world. For a while everyone believed he was—everyone, that is, but Myron. He himself, when he saw his Psyche in place, burst out weeping again louder than ever and vowed repeatedly at the top of his voice that Psyche had a beard. He beat his breast and begged the crowd to look at him, for he was the greatest fool that ever dishonored the name of sculptor. He went to the judges' platform and pounded upon it with his fists and indignantly commanded the judges to take unfavorable cognizance of Psyche's beard. He flatly forbade them even to consider awarding the prize to a barbarian who had neglected to polish away that shadow which clung to Psyche's jaws as palpably as the beard of Hermaphroditus at Cyprus. The judges explained plaintively that he was disturbing them and finally ordered him away.

Psyche held the field for a while longer but, as a result of Myron's own propaganda against her, that shadowy beard gradually assumed monstrous proportions in the eyes of all the spectators. At last, the sight of that snivelling warrior became so intolerable to everyone that Psyche was supplanted in her loveliness by the work of Phidias. As she swung earthward no one cheered more loudly than Myron and when she touched the ground he rushed at her and kicked her, so that it was impossible to say whether or not his tears were the result of a bruised toe. When Myron was done hopping, he ran to Phidias and assured that proud man how happy he was to have been defeated by such an artist. Then, he began explaining that his Psyche was not as dreadfully bearded as she had seemed. In his workshop, he said, where he had carved her, the floor had been covered with white chips, which had reflected a flowing light upon that misbegotten shadow, somehow lending it an appearance of life and youth, and it had not occurred to him what direct sunlight and a raised position would do to her, for he was that sort of a fool, and would Phidias just step over and inspect her now that a white cloak had been spread before her as a reflector?

But Phidias was brief and absent with Myron. He had eyes only for his own work, raised now in its perfection before the crowd. Phidias had imagined Human Progress as a girl, hurrying to some destiny unknown even to herself, and a young man rising up to follow after her, leaving his writing tablets and his weapons uncared-for upon the ground, his aged parents forgotten and forlorn beneath a fig tree. It is far beyond my power to describe the beauty of that work of Phidias. I can say only that it was done excellently in a high relief and I repeat the legend that the figure of that girl, hurrying in an exquisite flutter of draperies, served another surpassing artist years later as the model for the great Victory of Samothrace.

Now the crowd began howling that Phidias had certainly won and the sculptors yet to come had best cart their truck away in shame and secrecy. Only the great pride of Phidias prevented his appearing elated. But in the end even the work of Phidias went the way of all the others, replaced (oh, bitter pill for a proud man!) by the tablet of Photon, the Armenian. In all the crowd no one was half so outraged and shocked at that as Myron. Indeed, he was distracted from leading an assault upon the judges only by a greater urge to go and comfort Phidias in his shame. And, strangely enough, Phidias was glad to hear Myron now.

As the tablet of Photon, hot from the approval of the worthy judges, was hoisted into place, all the young men who had come from Athens with Praxiteles set up a loud concerted noise of retching. They would not be silent even though Orestes upon his dais scowled at them and his trumpets brayed for order. They retched only the louder and

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shouted that none of them would ever again need emetics after this. Some of them fell, . . . kicking, to the ground in feigned convulsions. For they were young idealistic men with artistic consciences.

This angered the crowd, determined now that no tablet but that of Photon, the Armenian, should adorn their Gate of Phœbus and Artemis. The longer the crowd looked, the more certain it became that Photon's work was actually the best in the competition. Then the retchings of the pupils of Praxiteles grew astonishingly realistic.

The crowd had expected that Photon's tablet would be done in the hollow relief of the Orient and that the judges would timorously accept it for fear of seeming not to appreciate the modernity of its archaic ugliness. But Photon was a clever man and, hence, a successful one. He understood how competitions were won. When his tablet was displayed, there was not one figure in it but was more broad-browed, and firm-jawed, and clean-limbed, and in all ways Grecian than any Greek in the crowd. No one in the crowd, not even Milo of Crotona, could fail to see that Photon's tablet did actually represent progress—good old-fashioned Greek progress.

Photon's tablet pictured a host of great, calm, stupid Greeks marching into the teeth of a hurricane which whipped the garments away from their comely bodies and left their locks as orderly as though they had just come from the barber's. All these people, in spite of their heaven-lifted chins and mazed looks of inspiration, in spite of the pretty naked children that ran in and out among their legs, followed swiftly after a fine broad-beamed woman of the wholesome Greek type, who clearly represented Liberty. Next, after Liberty, came Victory and Justice, her younger sisters, hearty wenches also, each carrying large symbols of their professions. Then followed a herd of other allegorical figures, excessively manly and womanly and astonishingly eupeptic, all with clear eyes and high Greek noses and unmistakable symbols to show who they were. There were Industry and Art and Agriculture, walking lock step. On one side of the procession Law had fallen out and was engaged in overcoming Larceny. On the other side Medicine was doing likewise by Fits. The Army was there, and the Navy, and Religion, Philosophy and Fishing. All were in step with Liberty and all were astonishingly handsome. Philosophy was a kind portrait of Aristotle (who was a judge in the competition) and the Army and the Navy were a pair of Oresteses in appropriate costumes, unmistakable even to the supercilious crease above the left eyebrow. Though, in both cases, the chin was rather more prominent than in real life.

The crowd, led by Aristotle, howled its approval. It could understand this sculping. It could see Humanity progressing right before its eyes. Everyone there effortlessly imagined how it would feel to be in that glorious procession, each man a little drunk with the exhilaration of righteousness and the girl beside him companionably swinging her melon-like haunches. There was nothing high-brow or hifalutin about Photon's work either. The girls weren't so embarrassingly naked as in the other tablets and they didn't have to be with the wind blowing like that. Everyone who looked at Photon's work felt inspired by it. It was elevating, the way Art ought to be, and, well—Greek.

At last the tablet of Praxiteles was brought forward and, as an especial, rather pitying mark of honor, it was hoisted up beside Photon's tablet, whence the judges expected to nod it away after a respectfully regretful interval, but I shall not be so great a fool as to attempt describing that. It was the greatest work of Praxiteles, done in his best, slightly archaic manner, very smooth and luminous. It was as finely delicate as the Psyche of Myron, as strong with life as the carvings of Phidias upon the Parthenon. It represented a man and a woman standing

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side by side. Expressionless. Only beautiful. If the reader is curious, he may go to the museum at Naples and see there the statue known as Orestes and Electra which is a poor copy of a memory of it.

When it was raised the crowd applauded politely, for it was the thing in those days to applaud Praxiteles, but the applause died away and the judges prepared to nod. Presently a scattered murmur fluttered through the crowd, and for some inexplicable reason the judges forbore a little longer. Then, all at once, a great cheer rang out—not the blurred bellow of the crowd, but a brazen bark of exultation such as a veteran regiment utters when the battle is joined. It sounded once more. And again!

Orestes leaned toward Socrates. "What sound," he said, "was that?"

And, flushing, Socrates answered, "That was the cheering of all the sculptors in the world!"

Then the judges rose and gave the signal and the tablet of Photon came down and the tablet of Praxiteles went up, and the Gods upon Olympus resolved to overlook many faults in Greece. Then the easy enthusiasm of the crowd swung round to Praxiteles with a crashing shout which shook the city and everyone rejoiced because the glory of Greece was redeemed again. Perhaps some there did see the beauty of Praxiteles's tablet, perhaps some did realize that human progress must lie largely in the appreciation of perfection, but most were merely enthusiastic. . . . In the tumult, Myron was whimpering and kissing the rough hands of Praxiteles, and Praxiteles was wondering if really after all . . . Photon, upon the neck of his gilded elephant, was pale with fury under his grease and rouge. All the other sculptors, yet to appear before the judges, were busy withdrawing their own entries and wildly cheering the name of Praxiteles. Orestes, with a smile upon his face and in his heart a better speech than the one he had planned, was waiting for silence. And—there was a disturbance before the dais of the judges.

The young man who had called himself the Sicilian was standing there, nodding his tawny fleece of hair and insisting upon his right to exhibit. But the judges indignantly brushed his claims aside until Orestes said scornfully, "Let him exhibit. It is his right".

Then Aristotle, who was very red in the face with anger, came close to Orestes and said, "But, Lord of the World, Zeus-begotten," (whereat the young Sicilian smiled) "the work of this greasy foreigner is an insult to ourselves and to our Perfect City; above all, to your Divine Person!"

And Orestes said sternly, "Let him exhibit. His shame shall be his reward".

With the flushed forehead and resolute mouth of one unused to reproaches, the young Sicilian turned wordlessly and followed his exhibit toward the scaffolding. Those who had a glimpse of the sculptured slab as it passed them broke into amazed chattering, and the farm people laughed and said that perhaps they knew nothing of art, but surely such things had never been seen in Greece before. One who had travelled was heard to protest enthusiastically that he had seen the very breed at Capri. But when the Sicilian's tablet was lifted up before the face of the crowd, a roar of fury burst out and everyone shrieked for the tablet to be broken and the sculptor to be whipped. They yelled the louder because all who saw the tablet felt an obscure truth in it, and everyone half discerned a beauty.

For the relief of the young Sicilian portrayed only a herd of swine or, rather, a portion of an endless river of swine, galloping all together in greed or panic. Many a sculptor there felt his heart exalted with an uncomprehended enthusiasm for the pattern of light and shadow which lay so beautifully upon the marble and for the glorious rush of motion which pulsed from right to left across it. Many a herdsman,

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recognizing only the stiff-legged bucking gallop of swine, laughed aloud for pleasure. Presently tremendous grunting and squealing went up from all the farm boys in the crowd, so that for a moment the Sicilian's herd of swine seemed to live. At that Aristotle frowned but most of those there aped the indignation of Orestes, for Orestes had just said, "Why! This is Cynicism!" And Socrates had answered, "Zeus-begotten, it is Worse! It is Pessimism! It is *un-Greek!*"

Orestes's scowl became terrible at that, and the crowd roared, almost to a man, "Throw him and his pigs out!"

Soon, however, to its increasing indignation, the crowd discovered that there were little storms in its midst of emotion quite other than anger. Two young sculptors who had come to the competition together were pounding each other's backs and shaking each other's hands, shouting themselves purple in the face, as though the young Sicilian had won at Elis and all their money had been upon him. Myron, in tears again, was flapping through the crowd like a hen, exhorting everyone, in language far too technical and emotional to be at all comprehensible, to "see". Then he would stop and explain to anyone who would listen that he realized now his Psyche wasn't sculpture at all but an ode, and he himself was no sculptor but a lousy poet. Phidias, looking somehow and in spite of all that uproar as solitary as a man in a desert, was staring up at the Sicilian's work, frowning doubtfully and chuckling with incredulous delight. As he looked, his fine, calm forehead flushed darker and darker with color. Finally, in the hollow voice of a self-contained man overcome at last by feeling, he began shouting for Praxiteles.

But Praxiteles was up on the scaffolding beside the tablet where he had clambered like a plump, gray monkey. He began haranguing the crowd, begging them to see the beauty of the Sicilian's masterpiece. (How great that beauty was may be judged from the fact that twenty centuries later Michelangelo read of it in a certain satire of Menander and copied its general effect with more or less success in his own "Battle of the Centaurs".) But the crowd would not hear Praxiteles and roared him furiously down. Then Praxiteles spat into the upturned, slavering face of that great chimera and, before the workmen on the scaffold could restrain him, he snatched the sculptor's hammer out of his belt and fell upon his own work, shattering it past repair. At that all his pupils cheered him, with tears streaming down their cheeks. A scared look of triumph came into the face of Photon, the Armenian.

When the crowd saw what was done before its eyes and in spite of its wishes, it surged forward with a bellow, impeding itself in its eagerness to lay hold of the Sicilian and strip his life away, as the life of a sapling may be stripped away branch by branch. Here the records which I have so dutifully consulted are at variance concerning the manner in which the Sicilian made his escape. One intimates that he was borne up over the heads of his pursuers by an eagle, *if not upon wings of his own,* and was deposited a week later, in an ecstatic state, within the citadel of Syracuse. Another states positively that he was enveloped in a luminous cloud which moved through the crowd, lowing like a bull with little thunders, and that everyone who opposed it was smitten with a palsy. In substantiation of this version, it is certainly true that the pythoness at Delphi died that night, calling terribly upon the name of Zeus. However, I prefer the more natural and conjectural third version, that the crowd missed the Sicilian simply because of its own blind eagerness to do him injury; that, in the confusion, Milo of Crotona suggested that the joke (which, he stated, he appreciated as much as anyone) had gone far enough and quickly slid the Sicilian's tablet into his ox-cart; that the Sicilian's frightened oxen made a way for

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him through the crowd with the lowered crescents of their horns and that the Sicilian himself passed unpretentiously away, while the crowd about the Gate of Phœbus and Artemis was shrieking for his life. This third version (which I suspect of certain elements of satire) states, also, before he was clear of the last fringes of the crowd, he heard those whom he passed already talking themselves back into good humor. Neighbors were telling each other that Praxiteles was just an old fool anyway and, personally, they were glad Photon had won the competition after all. There was, apparently, a surprising number of persons who had favored Photon from the very beginning. Photon's work had something to it, they said. They said a man could understand Photon's work. It wasn't 'way up in the air with a lot of talk about beauty. You could tell at a glance what it was all about. As a matter of fact, it was just as pretty as any of the other tablets that had been shown all day. That figure of Liberty, for instance, was the kind of girl a man would be proud to bring into his own home and introduce to his mother.

About the Gate of Phœbus and Artemis the crowd was good-natured again. It was, in fact, so busy cheering the Human Progress of Photon, the Armenian, that scarcely anybody noticed the body of Myron lying trampled beside his Psyche in the gutter. Later, when the crowd had thinned a little, Praxiteles and Phidias covered Myron's body with a white cloak and upon another they set up his Psyche as he had intended. They told each other gravely what a fine workman Myron had been. But presently even they were distracted, as the living must always be distracted from the dead. They began speculating as to the whereabouts of that young fellow and his wonderful pigs and they agreed to go in search of him together, for he had a lot to teach them. But though, when they had buried Myron, they searched diligently, they never found that young Sicilian.

Indeed, no one ever saw him or his work after that day. Diogenes, lurking in his tub beyond the crowd, was the last to recognize him. He had spied the young fellow driving his oxen westward at a leisurely pace and had scrambled out of his kennel like an old mastiff to congratulate a brother cynic. . . .

Once, several months later, when Diogenes was drunk (a condition not unprecedented among Arcadian philosophers) he confessed what had actually occurred. He had, he said, gone to the young sculptor, saying, "Permit the one man who understands you, sir, to shake you by the hand!"

But the Sicilian had not taken his hand. He had only smiled slightly, and answered, "I think that you, least of all, have understood, Old Cynic".

Then he had clucked at his oxen and moved away out of Arcadia.

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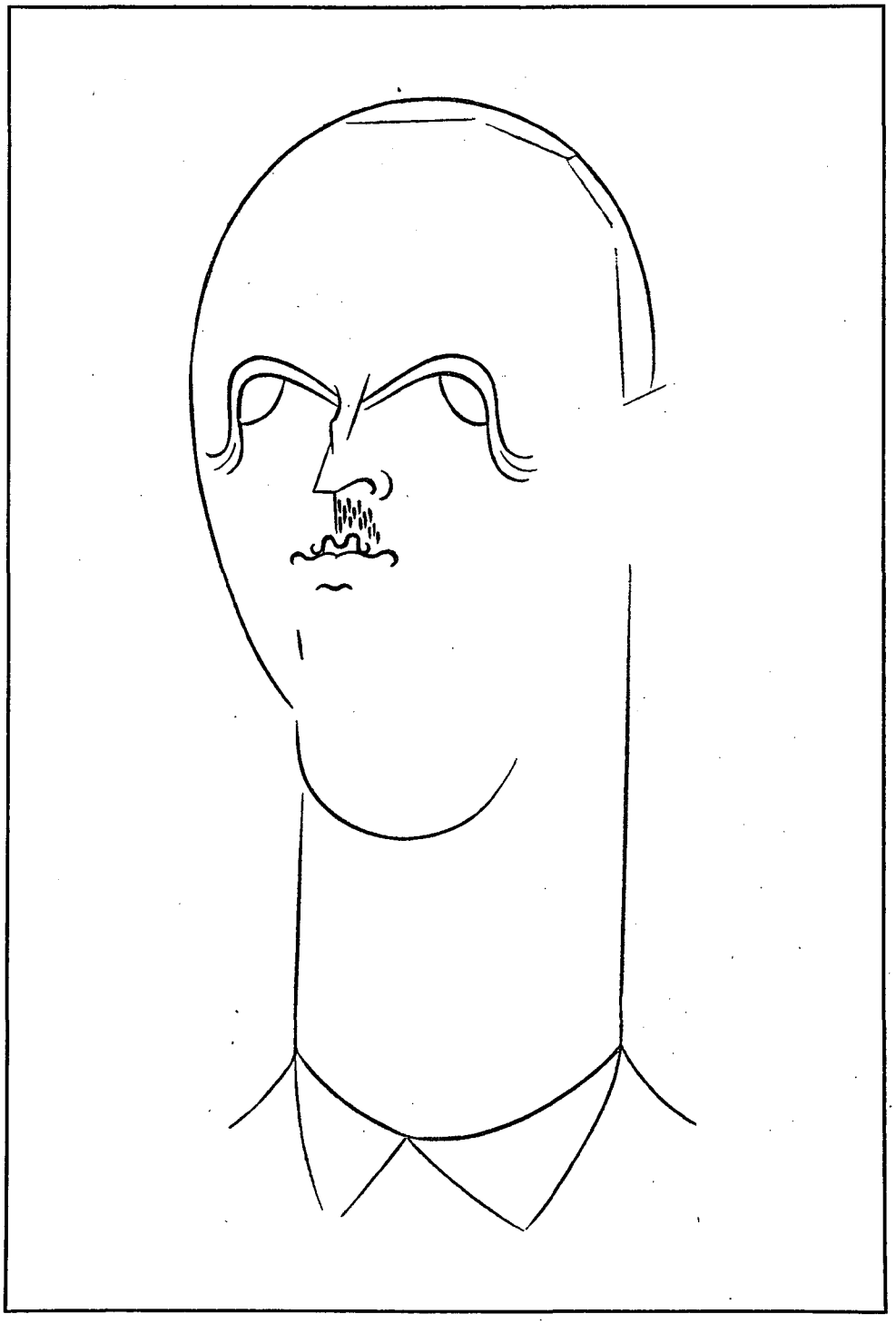

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

by Francis Brett Young

In the literary evolution of what condescending Europeans are pleased to call new countries, there appears to be a recognizable similarity of progression. As far as literature is concerned, the earliest stages are usually barren; which is natural enough. The pioneer has no place for art in his life; his energies of body and of imagination are absorbed to the uttermost in his conflict with untamed nature. His women, of necessity, play their part in the same struggle, bearing children to supplement the available force of labor, protecting them against strange diseases and unfamiliar enemies to life. In a pioneer community romances are lived, not written; leisure and contemplation are frowned upon as being vicious. Books there are none or, if any, only that epic of the pioneer life which is the *Old Testament*. Here and there, a man of action, impressed by the strangeness and dignity of his adventure, or a man of religion, inspired to bear witness to his missionary faith, sets down bare records of what he has seen, done or desired. Such are the chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers, the voyages of early navigators. Their writers handle the pen as they would handle a flintlock or an axe. A certain stark integrity gives vividness to their records; the abundant material, the virgin curiosity, the exaltation of perils faced and survived—these atone for the lack of what we call literary quality. Reading them, we feel ourselves participators in a living romance. When literary art appears, as sometimes it will, we are startled and exclaim: "These men could write!" But the surprise is a significant comment on our attitude.

The pioneer epoch of South Africa affords some examples of this stirring, artless romance. There are the early travels of Levaillant; there is that classic of big game hunting, Harris's *Wild Sports of Southern Africa,* a rare book which every sportsman, who wants information straight, as one might say, from the lion's mouth, is advised to acquire. Harris, an army officer on leave, as keen an observer as any good soldier should be, records a hunting trip to the Orange River and beyond it. His writing is like a good dispatch: clear, businesslike, economical. He might have been taken as a model and a tradition in the literature of sport, which has degenerated, alas, into those flushed catalogues of slaughter with which the modern big game hunter bores us. *Wild Sports of Southern Africa* is probably the best book of that kind in existence.

After the hunter comes the missionary. The best record of this character came, at the beginning of the last century, from Thomas Pringle. Pringle, a Scotch Evangelical missionary, is one of the most interesting figures of the early South African scene. Beneath an exterior that is somewhat precise and forbidding, a clerical uniform of decent black, this pastor hides an ardent

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and turbulent spirit. He was, in fact, a poet. One of his poems has become the foundation stone of the South African Anthology. But pioneers are little concerned with poetry and his lyrics, it must be confessed, are not very good. His prose, on the other hand, is lucid and dignified; interesting, also, if only as social history, up to a certain point. Beyond that point, he becomes absorbed by local religious politics: the inevitable situation in which a desire to protect and proselytize the powerful hordes of natives conflicts with the interests of a small community of white men, clinging by the skin of their teeth to the verge of a hostile continent. The South African pioneers, particularly the Dutch first-comers, who had been able to hold what they had only by a deliberate ruthlessness, had reason to resent the missionaries' negrophile fervors. The scene of Pringle's labors resembles, broadly speaking, that which has been portrayed in Sarah Gertrude Millin's novel, *God's Stepchildren*. The problems that faced him included the uncomfortable heritage of slavery. Pringle was a man of deep feeling; so the artist—and he was an artist—became submerged in the propagandist and the politician. His work, none the less, is of great interest, if only as a literary document relating to that pioneer phase of South African life which has been dealt with so thoroughly by Cory in his work, *The Rise of South Africa*.

Whether the Dutch pioneers have left significant products of this kind, I do not know. No doubt, the Capetown Library would yield a number of personal records; but the fact remains that all the books which I have mentioned were printed outside South Africa. Apart from news sheets and polemical pamphlets, the South African press at this period was concerned with politics rather than with creative literature—a fact not to be wondered at in that strenuous age, when the unbroken power of the Kaffir hordes lay like a black thundercloud on every border and the settled lands lay divided between determined English and equally stubborn Dutch living in a state of racial rancor and obstinate misunderstanding which found its solution in the forlorn adventure of the Great Trek, that mass migration, the most romantic in modern history, which sent the Boer ox-wagons rumbling out of the Colony and over the Drakensberg to search for space and liberty on virgin plains: an exodus which culminated in the massacre of Weenen and the shattering revenge which put an end to the Zulu power. There lies the material of an epic still to be written. We have an admirable account of it in Cloete's monograph: *The Great Trek*. The contemporary Dutch accounts of the Trek's survivors make poignant reading but they are not literature.

II

Thus, in a confusion of pamphlets, letters, diaries and official documents ends the first phase, the age of the pioneers. In the meantime the literary chronicle must wait for half a century: fifty years of activity as pressing, if not so hazardous, as that of the pioneer days. By this time, even if the racial rancor has not died (as two Anglo-Dutch wars will prove) the scene at the bases, those settled areas that lie behind the frontiers where the black man's menace unites both races in a compact watchfulness, has reached a degree of stability and spiritual composure out of which a literature of some kind might reasonably be expected to emerge. That point was reached in America at the time which produced great New Englanders, Hawthorne, Emerson, Whitman; in Australia, at that which gave rise to a literature of minor significance: the poems of Lindsay Gordon, the romances of Henry Kingsley and Rolf Boldrewood. The covered wagons have rolled away, to the west, to the north. Over the scene which they have left a calm peace broods, tempting the efflorescence of a native literature. The second period of a

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new civilization has been reached. The time is ripe for the great South African novel.

It comes. Perhaps, after all, it is not very great. It is, at least, South African. In 1883, George Meredith, acting as reader for the venerable firm of Chapman and Hall, accepted for publication a novel entitled *The Story of an African Farm,* by a young woman named Olive Schreiner, who disguised her identity under the assertive pseudonym of Ralph Iron.

I find it is generally assumed that Olive Schreiner was of South African Dutch descent. This is not so. Her father, the acknowledged original of old Otto, the overseer in her masterpiece, was a German Evangelical pastor. Her mother was an Englishwoman named Lyndall: there is a village of that name, a place of signal beauty, perched upon the limestone curb that bounds the southern extremity of the English Lake District. Olive Schreiner herself was born in Cape Colony, and the scene which provided her with the all-important background for her great novel inspired a later South African novelist, Pauline Smith. This background was the mountainous table-land of the Karoo.

Not only her genius but, also, the circumstances of her early life have something in common with those of Charlotte Brontë. Like the author of *Jane Eyre,* she adopted a male pseudonym. She also became a governess and found imaginative refuge from a life of spiritual exile in the composition of her book. It is in these pages, for the first time, that the South African landscape—which, in its marvels of clarity, light and color, is among the most subtly moving on earth, breeding among those who have known it a nostalgia that has no equal in poignancy—is displayed with the perceptions of a poet. In place of the admirable detailed descriptions of the earlier writers, Olive Schreiner conveys that quality of the South African scene which can be described only by the much abused word "atmosphere", "the truth"—to quote Conrad—"manifold and one underlying its aspect; its one, illuminating, convincing quality." In other words, this woman, like all the greatest of novelists, was a poet.

The story itself is a slender one, ill-constructed, formless, admittedly melodramatic. Yet, through its ill-adjusted pages, there shines continually the indubitable flame of genius, transfusing, irradiating them with a glow, a fervor that beggars the resources of criticism. The enraptured Cecil Rhodes, a genius of another quality, realized his kinship with this strange writer. He found himself "unable to account for the book's splendour". And so do I. I can only acknowledge it, suggesting that this splendor sprang, as did that of Rhodes's own achievement, from a surpassing love of its setting, of the red, passionate earth of Africa, so rich, so cruel, so fervid, so austere, to which these two spirits, so strong and so dissimilar, were bound by an imaginative tie more potent than mere heredity. That there is something in this theory may be argued from the fact that when Olive Schreiner went to England, consorting with writers of her own period, such as John Oliver Hobbes, Edward Carpenter, Arthur Symons and Havelock Ellis, her genius, robbed of its true inspiration, lost its moving quality. Her other writings, even the huge posthumous novel *Undine,* which proceed from ethical and sociological enthusiasms, lack the original fire of *The Story of an African Farm.* That book remains the most perfect example of an imperfect masterpiece ever written.

It might be imagined that the appearance of a work so powerful, so truly characteristic of the soil, would have been the herald and inspiration of a new period in South African literature. At least, you might suppose, this writer would have found eager imitators. Indeed, if the settled life of Cape Province had been allowed to develop along the normal lines of a new agricultural community, this probably would have happened.

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During the composition of this novel a new interracial struggle, the First Anglo-Boer War, distracted and deranged the South African scene. Immediately following an inconclusive peace, there emerged a factor which not only dislocated the continuity of the colony's existence but remains, to this day, the dominating influence of South Africa's destiny. In the gray, conglomerate quartzite of the Witwatersrand (the Ridge of the White Waters) a gold-field of unexampled magnitude was discovered. In the neighborhood of Kimberley, among the pebbly, clay pockets of "blue ground", diamonds were found.

Immediately the prospect of a slow, organic development along pastoral or agricultural lines was shattered. The tide of human interest and activity surged northward, into the Transvaal. From every corner of the earth greedy hordes of prospectors, traders, speculators came flocking in search of easy riches. The influence that has given South Africa a premature material development submerged its spiritual life. The South Africa of *The African Farm* went under and was lost forever, leaving that strange book as its sole and splendid literary monument.

III

Up to that time immigration had been gradual, incomers had been absorbed, almost unnoticed, into the traditions of the Anglo-Dutch colonial civilization. Now—and the situation has its parallel elsewhere—foreigners disembarked in such predominant numbers, bringing with them traditions so various and ideals so alien, that all that was most typical of Olive Schreiner's South Africa became, for the time, exceptional. In an era of social flux, when the eyes of most men are fixed on the making of easy money, in a restless era, when no human abode is looked upon as permanent, no art can push deep roots into the soil. Now, even the settled south turned its eyes northward. New mouths to be fed; a new prosperity to be shared! If books were to be written (and nothing, it seems, can stop the writing of books), they would deal, naturally enough, with the superficially romantic aspects of the developing country, resembling, if a parallel be needed, the literature of action as represented by Bret Harte and the romanticists of the Wild West. The ancient placidity of Concord passes for slowness. The age of immigration has arrived.

It brings with it, as might be expected, a shallow flood of fiction. Rider Haggard produces a kind of adventure story calculated to excite tired minds. The romantic-historical essay called *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours* and the charming *Jess,* a story of the First Boer War, are followed by such highly-colored adventures as *King Solomon's Mines, Allan Quatermain* and *She.* Excellent, of their kind, for Haggard was a competent writer, full of zest and dowered with an imagination fit to enthrall unsophisticated youth. The Second Boer War lent its scene to a flamboyant best-seller, *The Dop Doctor,* the crude, violent, intensely sentimental narrative of a woman who called herself Richard Dehan, anticipating, in its theatrical presentation of the scene's surface, the cheapness of its emotions, its exalted rhapsodical eroticism and its hysterical adulation of the stupid, prepotent male, the novels of other women such as Cynthia Stockley and (in a more avowedly sentimental vein) the Rhodesian Gertrude Page. The era of immigration gets, in short, the literature it deserves: books aimed at a definite audience, an audience of harassed city-dwellers, preponderantly female, whose eyes are fixed, pathetically, on the wide spaces that surround their cramped lives. One good adventure story emerges from this welter, the work of a government official, one of "Milner's young men", John Buchan. It is called *Prester John,* a sincere and manly work that another Scotsman, Stevenson, might easily have written and would certainly have admired. A short story

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by the same writer, *The Moon Endureth,* could have been written only by a man who knew South Africa and loved it.

Beneath this flood of high-pitched, romantic rubbish some sober work continued to be written. Scully, a sadly-neglected writer of genuine power and insight, published several volumes of sketches which carry on, without its flaming spiritual force, the tradition of *The African Farm.* Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, a man of culture and a first-rate field-naturalist, wrote a book about the wild life of the *veld,* a classic in its limited field entitled *Jock of the Bushveld.* But literature is still in hiding.

Meanwhile, oblivious of the arts, modern South Africa has been born. The Anglo-Dutch racial feud has been settled, perhaps forever, by England's iniquitous destruction of the two Boer Republics and the generous, far-sighted peace which the Liberal ministry of Campbell-Bannerman imposed on them. A wave of expansion and prosperity swept the country. A stable government, in which both races shared, gave to South Africa a new sense of security. Johannesburg is no longer a mining settlement but a great modern city; Capetown shares with Pretoria the dignity of a capital. The South Africans begin to realize that they have a nationality of which they may well be proud, a past worth remembering. Two historians appear.

The older of these, Theal, has written a history of many volumes; into them he has gathered an enormous mass of information for which future generations of South Africans must be grateful. As a history this huge work has grave defects: a partisan tinge and a certain dry bitterness of presentation invalidate much of its labor. The author, learned as he may have been, was not a writer of quality; the magnitude and variety of the material overwhelmed a mind that could not grasp its essence. Theal's *History of South Africa* is in no sense a work of art. As a basis for future works of art it may prove invaluable.

The second historian, Cory, has produced, in *The Rise of South Africa,* six volumes of far greater significance: a masterly, well-balanced, admirably documented work. Its interest is centered in the story of the Eastern Province, that vexed frontier of Kaffirland, baptized in the last century by so much devoted blood. It tells, with a sense of detail and perspective that is beyond praise, one of the most stirring and romantic stories of human endeavor in modern times, in a style which, if it be not brilliantly illuminating in the present manner of historical writing, is never slovenly, cheap or undignified. Even the foreigner will find *The Rise of South Africa* an engrossing romance.

IV

In the midst of this hopeful period another disaster fell upon South Africa, the outbreak of the Great War, a disaster providentially limited—though the South African forces acquitted themselves magnificently in Delville Wood, in Botha's invasion of German Southwest Africa and in Smuts's East African campaign, the country realized the benefits of its remoteness from the center of the struggle in a relative quietude and an absolute, abundant prosperity. Gold was at a premium and the Rand had gold to offer. In another comparatively sheltered country, America, the war gave rise to a literary renaissance the growing force of which is now being felt. In South Africa, the same period produced the two most considerable writers who have appeared since Olive Schreiner's death. It is significant, perhaps, that both of them are women.

The first, in order of time, Sarah Gertrude Millin, the most widely read of modern South African writers, is a product of the urban civilization of the Rand, that sprawling cosmopolis which spreads its ungainly length along thirty miles of white, gleaming mine-dumps. A woman of keen observation, an inquisitive intellect, with a genuine liter-

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ary gift, she is the first South African writer of any consequence to realize the potential literary wealth of the great gold-reef, not only in those violent contrasts of *chiaroscuro* which gave to Olive Schreiner's landscape its dancing light and sombre magnificence, but in the social and racial contrasts, no less remarkable, which the microcosm of the new Johannesburg displays, and in the added contrast between the scrambling activities of the City of Gold and the emptiness of the great expanses of *veld* that surround it, where the life of sleepy *dorps* perpetuates a tradition established before gold was dreamed of.

One of her earliest novels, *The Dark River,* displayed all the qualities which we have learned to associate with her work: a thoughtful and dignified intelligence; a prose style of distinction; a sense of beauty qualified by a certain self-consciousness in its expression; a profound, yet somewhat troubled ethical bent; a faith and a pity slightly tinged with despair. There is no danger of underestimating the integrity, the intellectual curiosity of this writer. She has thought much and deeply on the social perplexities that vex the life of small towns (as in her book, *Middle Class*) and on the South African racial problems posed by the impact of Dutch on English and of both on the African native —the latter a race problem with which she dealt in the admirable novel called, *God's Stepchildren,* and beside which the American color question seems a political trifle. She has presented all these problems seriously and developed them with power, penetration and real knowledge of the conditions which they imply. She is always a careful and a conscious artist, cognizant of the best literary modes of her time, as eagerly up-to-date as a stop-press news-column, even when she writes, as in *God's Stepchildren,* of the last century. Perhaps it is this very quality of eagerness, to which the self-consciousness of a new civilization makes its writers particularly susceptible, that marks her greatest defect. South African born though she may be, one feels, in reading her books, that her eyes are directed with humble wistfulness toward the "advanced" literary journals on both sides of the Atlantic. As a valid excuse, she has the fact that the South African reading public is a small one which increases slowly; but the fact remains that her work has no autochthonous flavor. Admirable as it is, it does not carry with it that smell of the African soil, that essential odor of the *veld* which made Olive Schreiner's writing a passable substitute for a mail-boat ticket to the Cape. Any civilized European, English, French or German, if only he were sufficiently intelligent and observant, could have written her books and might, I hasten to add, have been proud of having written them. A great writer she may be. The great South African writer she is not.

I dwell upon this aspect of Mrs. Millin's work as a particular disqualification rather than as a general defect. It reveals itself most markedly in what I believe to be the best of her books, which is not a novel, but a critical survey of the civilization of which she is a part, published under the title of *The South Africans.* Here, against a historical background portrayed with the most scrupulous fairness and integrity, she has built up a picture of the various groups of humanity of which the South African nation is composed. This picture is as vivid as it is true, as just as, from the literary point of view, it is masterly. She has dealt with every element in it faithfully, sympathetically—not only with the main racial units, English, Dutch, half-caste and Negro, but with the Asiatics, Jews and Indians, whose later infiltration complicates the confusion of the scene. Anyone who desires to understand that scene and its implications, particularly to the South African himself, bewildered by the conflict of political, racial and social prejudices, this work should be a textbook of inestimable value, all the more valuable in that this critic has the detachment of an outsider. Passionately though she may feel

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for her country and dearly as she may love it, such is the final impression that Mrs. Millin's writings leave. Though entirely poignant, she is as impartial as an influenza bacillus and this exaggeration of a virtue has inhibited her vision, so that she sees pathos rather than beauty, and made the fire of her imagination resemble a distant and artificial illuminant rather than that fierce sunlight, proper to the South African scene.

There is another important element in Mrs. Millin's detachment. Even when she is dealing with rural subjects she is, I think, essentially an urban writer. Now, the industrial development of South Africa has differed from that of other virgin lands in a prematureness rendered possible by the chance discovery of the Johannesburg goldfield. Civilization has not pushed northward as, for example, the civilization of the United States moved west, consolidating its progress step by step. No sooner was gold discovered than railways were flung inland from the seaboard to the Rand, leaving, on either side of their tracks, vast areas of neglected and undeveloped land. To reach that fountain of easy wealth, South Africa skipped over half the width of Europe. But the gold of the Rand, geologists tell us, is not inexhaustible. Some day, and a day not so far distant, the last thin tons of ore will be crushed and the Golden Age (which is not, in this case, synonymous with the Age of Innocence) will end. The country will be left stranded with a top-heavy industrialism. Later, a new industrialism may arise, founded on metals less precious and labors more stubborn. In the meantime South Africa will probably return to the point at which its population stampeded northward in the eighteen-eighties and work out its arduous salvation on the despised land. The destiny of South Africa must be wrought, in the end, from her soil. That is one of the reasons why the second of her post-war novelists, Pauline Smith, appears to me to be a more genuine expression of her essential spirit than Mrs. Millin.

In writing of Pauline Smith we are more concerned, for the present, with promise than with achievement. She has to her credit only two books against Mrs. Millin's half dozen. The literary field which she has explored is a narrow one compared with that which Mrs. Millin has surveyed and exploited; the burden of social and racial preoccupations that weighs upon the older writer's acute but puzzled mind does not concern her at all. She is, first and last, as Arnold Bennett discovered in his preface to her first volume of stories, *The Little Karoo,* an artist.

That fervent preface might easily have afflicted Pauline Smith with acute self-consciousness, a disease to which more than one young writer of promise has succumbed. That she survived it without infection, as her next book, *The Beadle,* proved, is a confirmation of the writer's stability and of the critic's prophetic judgement. As a matter of fact, *The Little Karoo* deserved the compliments which Mr. Bennett paid her. The writing, though obviously unpractised, has a curious, thin limpidity, a dry purity which resembles that of the Karoo air itself. It has a prose style almost *naïf* in its simple austerity, bursting, at moments when the emotion of the contents overstrains their fragile vehicle, into an efflorescence of lyrical beauty as startling as the sudden spring of those high plains. Reading these stories, one does not stop to admire or appraise some sudden acuteness of observation, profundity of thought or felicity of phrase. One does not say: "How keen, how wise, how clever she is!" as, constantly, one has said these things of Mrs. Millin. The acknowledgment of Pauline Smith's power lies in the reader's complete, uncritical surrender to her illusion. The question, whether she is keen or wise or clever, does not arise. In all these qualities Mrs. Millin could probably give her points. Yet, here, but for an occasional lisping uncertainty which speaks of youth, one hears the authentic accent of a born writer.

The people about whom Pauline Smith

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writes in *The Little Karoo* are human material particularly suited to display her talent. They belong to that remarkable race, the Cape Dutch; a simple, austere, industrious and, often, ignorant race. The very isolation of their lives and the impressiveness of the mountain-girdled theatre in which they are lived make them fit subjects for drama as this author conceives it. Their very limitations, the iron-bound rigidity of their social and moral code, make drama seem more natural and inevitable than it can ever be among modernized communities whose freedom of conduct knows no limits and where men and women are a law unto themselves. For the essence of drama is contest, and in a life that has no standards there is nothing to struggle against. With this human material, set against a background that has, for her, the mystical significance of impressions unconsciously stored in childhood, Pauline Smith has written, in *The Little Karoo,* eight stories, pitiful, ruthless, tender, human and revealing, which mark, in my judgment, the highest point of artistic creation in South Africa since Olive Schreiner's death.

She is, moreover, in a purer degree than any other writer, Mrs. Millin included, authentically South African. Let me be more precise. In a number of novels Mrs. Millin has described with admirably accurate detail a great variety of South African scenery; she is able to make these isolated scenes living and present by the knowledge and literary power which she has used in describing them. They remain isolated scenes, which is probably all that she desires them to be, picked out and pinned to her page like perfect entomological specimens. But when Pauline Smith writes of South Africa the reader is conscious not merely of that small portion of it which she is describing, but of the vast lands that surround it—from the white gleaming sands of False Bay and the oak alleys of Stellenbosch, over the Karoo, which she has made her own, past the cold crags of the Drakensberg and the Vaal River to where the High Veld dips down into the tropics and goes rolling onward, in hot monotony, to the Great Lakes and the Mountains of the Moon. All Africa, in one breath! The power to suggest by the written word so much that is unwritten, these overtones that go on endlessly vibrating, is one of the characteristics of a great writer. Whether Pauline Smith has the other necessary qualities, I cannot say. The volume of her work is too small to justify a pronouncement, and her second book, the more ambitious work called *The Beadle,* adds to *The Little Karoo* small material for criticism.

The wind bloweth where it listeth. At any moment this young and vigorous country may blossom into literature as the dry *veld* breaks into its astounding *bloemtyd*. Here and there, as I have indicated, a flower has shown itself in the prose of these two novelists and in that remarkable poem, *The Flaming Terrapin* of Roy Campbell. But the spring has not yet come.

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THE HISTORY OF THEIR BOOKS

III. SINCLAIR LEWIS

by Arthur Bartlett Maurice

SEVEN cities of Greece claimed the distinction of having been the birthplace of Homer. Five cities of the United States recognized themselves as the Zenith of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt,* fumed furiously at the delineation and, through their newspapers, hurled at the head of the author anathemas and charges of hospitality violated. Yet, despite the recognition of Cincinnati and Duluth and Kansas City and Minneapolis and Milwaukee, Zenith was neither Cincinnati nor Duluth nor Kansas City nor Minneapolis nor Milwaukee, and not one of these cities contributed materially to its making.

From their pulpits two ministers of Kansas City announced themselves as originals from whom the Reverend Elmer Gantry had been drawn and reviled Sinclair Lewis. When informed that there was a rival claimant in the field, each stopped the attack on Mr. Lewis for a moment to denounce the other as a rank impostor and a colossal and vainglorious liar. Actually, in writing *Elmer Gantry,* Sinclair Lewis had been unaware of the existence of either of them.

Throughout an entire season, from platform and pulpit, a mid-western evangelist told the story of the terrible rebuke that he had administered to Sinclair Lewis. "That man Lewis came up to me, put his arm around my shoulder and held out his hand. I refused to shake hands with him. I told him that any man who would shake hands with him was an enemy of God. He slunk away abashed and ashamed." The story was one that never failed to evoke tumultuous applause, so the evangelist went on telling it despite the fact that, in reality, the historian and the hero (or villain) never met.

A very prominent minister of Los Angeles pointedly invited Sinclair Lewis to visit that city, promising that in such an event he himself would lead a mob in a lynching party. A minister in New Hampshire started proceedings to have Sinclair Lewis put in prison for the writing of *Elmer Gantry.* So it may be seen that the life of a modern "best-selling" author is not always a monotonous one.

Some years ago one of our most conspicuous essayists and critical writers ascribed the mid-western movement, in general, and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street,* in particular, to the influence of Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology,* published in 1915. It was an ingenious and plausible theory, but it hardly fitted the facts. *Main Street,* published in 1920, was begun in 1905 when Sinclair Lewis was a sophomore at Yale.

In that first version of undergraduate days the title of the tale was "The Village Virus". Carol Kennicott, the heroine and chief protagonist of the eventual novel, had no part in the original story. Instead, the male character, who in time became Guy Pollock, was the one who attempted to implant "culture" in Gopher Prairie. Twenty-five thousand words were written before the attempt

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was abandoned. Carol Kennicott appeared in a second draft, begun some years later, not as a bride, but as the village school teacher.

The autumn of 1919 was the turning point in Sinclair Lewis's writing career. He had written four relatively successful novels, *Our Mr. Wrenn, The Trail of the Hawk, The Job* and *Free Air*. He had built for himself a market as a short story writer but he felt that the time had come when *Main Street* must be written. For this work he burned his bridges behind him. To exist while writing the book, he was obliged to borrow $500 from his father. He began the novel in November or December, 1919, and finished it the following August.

He himself believed in the book and so did his publisher. They shared dreams. Lewis foresaw a total sale of 15,000 copies; the publisher, 25,000; a rashly enthusiastic head salesman predicted 35,000. The book was launched at an unfortunate date, toward the end of October, too late for the autumn trade. The booksellers bought reluctantly. Yet, by January first the sale had reached 50,000 and today, in all American editions, *Main Street* has sold approximately 800,000 copies.

In the original plan for *Babbitt* the hero was named Pumphrey and the entire novel was to have dealt with the events of twenty-four hours—an idea that holds through one third of the book as eventually written. The story of the writing of *Babbitt* is a story of many cities. The notes for the book were made in Washington. It was begun in a hotel in Cornwall, England, continued in a house in Kent, in a villa on Lake Maggiore, Italy, in Rome, completed and revised in London.

Likewise, *Arrowsmith*. That novel was planned in Hartford, Connecticut; "written at" in the Virgin Islands, the Barbados, Trinidad, Venezuela and London and finally written, from beginning to end, in a *petit château* on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, the same *petit château* in which George Moore had lived when writing one of his books. For *Arrowsmith* there was a preliminary plan of 60,000 words. The first draft ran to 280,000 words. That was finally cut to 200,000 words.

Probably nine out of ten readers of *Elmer Gantry* share the current belief that the character of Sharon Falconer, the woman evangelist, was drawn directly from Aimee McPherson. As a matter of fact, the Sharon Falconer part of the novel had assumed definite form years before Sinclair Lewis or anyone else had ever heard of the Los Angeles evangelist. In the story as first seen, there was no Elmer Gantry. The mental picture out of which the book grew was of a woman evangelist perishing in the destruction by fire of the tabernacle in which she was preaching. In the torrent of hostile criticism directed at *Elmer Gantry* there was particular emphasis upon the point in the story where the "evangelical crew" were pictured as hard drinkers who destroyed property in the rented quarters in which they lived. That was drawn from actual episodes, and the legal charges made by the owner of the damaged property are fully set forth in a recently published book, *Evangelized America.*

Elmer Gantry was originally Elmer Bloor. That name was discarded for two reasons: it was likely to be spelled in various ways, and Mr. Lewis learned of the existence of a woman evangelist by that name.

Incidentally, Mr. Lewis's forthcoming book, *Dodsworth,* achieved its present title through a process of evolution. First, it was called "Twilight Dancers". Then, for a considerable time the author worked on it as "Man Alone", although he was somewhat worried by the resemblance of the title to G. K. Chesterton's *Manalive.* One day he noticed a book on a London bookstall called *Man Alone,* so he changed the title to "Exile". That was discarded in turn for "Sunset"; "Sunset", for "The Dear Imprisonment"; "The Dear Imprisonment", for "The Charming Mrs. Dodsworth" and, eventually, *Dodsworth, tout court.*

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A COMMENTARY

by Rebecca West

London, January.

IT HAPPENED that we ate our Christmas dinner at the Ville d'Avray, which lies beside the two lakes that Corot was forever painting, and is over the way from Balzac's villa, and is the inn to which Sapho took her young lover, or to which her young lover took Sapho, have it your own way. Before dinner we walked round the lakes, on which stars floated, and lamp-lit windows, and poplars so like each other that they seemed to have reflections beside them as well as beneath them: and went through the woods, which the moonlight made gray as a Persian cat, to the old coach-road from Paris to Versailles. In one of the circles which were cut in the woods every few hundred metres so that the coaches might pass, we stood and named the famous men and women who had driven that way, and soon stopped for lack of breath. Someone wondered, "Has any country ever had such a prolonged Golden Age as has France?" and someone else said, "Well, it is over now", and made adverse comment on the present state of French literature, ending with "There is not one good play in Paris at the present moment except *Mariette*". We turned then and went back to our dinner, and while we waited one of us picked up a continental *Daily Mail,* and saw that Mona Tattersall and Stacy Aumonier were dead.

* * *

Mona Tattersall was a girl in her middle twenties who had in her time left her mark on literature. For it was largely the life she and her friends had led at the Embassy Club in London, at the Potinière in Deauville, and the Sporting Club at Monte Carlo, which was responsible for the state of mind which led Michael Arlen to write *The Green Hat* and other people to read it. She had that golden fairness which lends glamour to every act and aspect of those who possess it; she had the tireless health which usually comes of simple living in the country, so that when one saw her rosy and jolly as a milkmaid at five in the morning after a twenty-hour day spent golfing, swimming, riding, gambling, dancing, dining, one felt that this was a daughter of the gods who was exempt from human limitations. Because of the psychic emptiness of England during the exhausted years after the war, it accepted the novels and plays her set inspired in people who were not of it, though these were plainly as different from imaginative literature as delirium is from creative vision. Michael Arlen is no longer the vogue; where Noel Coward shows the influence of this period he seems old fashioned; and Frederick Lonsdale, because of his profound sympathy with it, cancels the effect of his own wit. It is eerie that the girl herself should have hardly survived the fashion she engendered.

* * *

Stacy Aumonier, that charming little human mole with brown eyes and thick hair

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that looked like fur and hands that he held in front of him like paws, might have been an extremely distinguished artist in at least three ways—for he was a delightful painter, a writer with a most tender sense of character, and an impersonator who had excelled Ruth Draper before Ruth Draper had visited these shores—if, for years and years, he had ever felt quite well. I suppose he went out of the world without ever having displayed more than twenty-five percent of his gifts, except benevolence, of which I cannot believe he had much more than he showed, for no human being could have that. One had the same feeling of waste about Elinor Wylie later in the evening, when one remembered, because we were singing French nursery rhymes, how Elinor had loved to sing at parties, raising her voice happily, caring no more for its shrillness than a child marching round a Christmas tree cares whether the trumpet that it blows is cracked.

* * *

Elinor Wylie had been in England a good deal during the last few years and she was always at her best when she was here, perhaps because our sedative airs are more wholesome for those who suffer from high blood-pressure than the bracing American climate. She was at once gayer and calmer; and her beauty seemed more a part and expression of herself, and less a hollow statue into which her spirit had fled to take refuge from the innumerable torments raised up against her by her excessive sensibility. At a party given by Robert and Sylvia Lynd at their house in Hampstead her face was not merely boneless but was rounded like a child's, because she was so pleased at her new dress, a model she had been able to buy cheaply in Paris, being as slim as the slim mannequin for whom it had been made; at the new shoes which showed off the narrowness of her feet and the new stockings which showed off the shapeliness of her legs; at her week-end in Wiltshire, which she had spent among admiring people in lovely country; at the leafy garden where she sat; at the good time she was having. Only once in the evening did there come into the voice that shrillness which showed that she was at odds with her environment; and that I find wholly delightful to remember. For the occasion of her protest was that somebody had said that Edna St. Vincent Millay was obviously finished, it was so long since she had published a book; and Elinor was crying out that Edna St. Vincent Millay was a genius and could not be finished; that there would come a book quite soon, and that when it came it would be wonderful, wonderful, wonderful.

* * *

But this summer it was plain that England had no longer its curative magic for her. The last time I saw her was at a cocktail party given by one of our young exquisites in his very beautiful bedroom in a house in old Westminster. She hobbled in still maimed and twisted from her recent fall down a flight of stairs; and though weeks had elapsed since it happened her face was still that greenish-white people turn when they have just sprained a limb. It had been arranged by the host that she was to lie on the bed and the party was to gather round her. But when she saw me she limped over to me and would not leave me until she had asked if I had seen the reports, which some American papers had published, that her fall had been an attempt at suicide. I answered truthfully that I had heard them but had not believed them, knowing that at the time she was in unusually good spirits, having heard accounts of her fall by people who had been staying in the house with her when it happened and being aware that, outside prisons, such a manner of suicide is unheard of. Tears came into her eyes and she burst out that the story had been horrible for her husband, as it certainly must have been. One perceived again, as one so often did when she was sad and indignant, that she had be-

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lieved everything that had been said to her when she was a débutante. People had then assured her that because she was beautiful and a woman they would worship her endlessly and protect her from all harm; and when they did nothing of the sort and published vile stories about her in the newspapers she was as hurt as a child who has found itself tricked and cheated by an adult.

* * *

Then she lay down on the wide bed on a cloth-of-silver counterpane, with her head on a silver pillow. Her face looked quite gray. But in a little she struggled to her feet again because our host had handed round brushes and India ink and was making us paint our signatures on his lacquered silver walls, and the idea amused and excited her. She made her way round the room, to see what the rest of us had done before she began her effort. There was one signature which she greatly admired and she clung to the wall below it, looking up wistfully and crying, "Oh, that is beautiful! I shan't be able to do it half so well". The terrible and absurd despair in her voice was so intense that it staggered one. "How is it possible," one asked oneself, "that a woman who feels little things as acutely as that can go on living for a week?" One also wondered how much in her that struck the superficial observer as egotism was an unbridled passion for perfection which was too thoroughgoing for her to exempt herself from praise or blame. It is tragic to realize how often that passion must have been cheated of finding its satisfaction in her own work by her treacherous body, which reacted to excitement with an extravagance utterly destructive to the calm of her spirit; and by that still more treacherous part of her spirit which plotted against itself by perpetually drawing her within the sphere of excitements. I do not believe we have left to us ten percent of the beauty Elinor Wylie might have created had she been permitted by her own constitution to know peace.

How do they do it, those artists who have enough sensibility to make their perceptions worth recording and yet protect themselves from receiving any shocks from their sensibility, so that they retain a steady hand and can make a clear and unwavering record? Two most startling examples of the feat have come my way recently. This autumn I went with a friend to one of a limited number of performances of *La Dame aux Camélias* which were being given at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt by the beautiful and brilliant young French actress, Falconetti. She looks as Lina Cavalieri must have looked in her youth; and in the stylized film, *The Passion of St. Joan,* in which she played the saint and dissembled her beauty by cropping her hair and assuming a sturdy peasant face, showed something like genius. She received, by the way, a most singular tribute to her powers in this film from the ecclesiastical authorities. They successfully appealed to the censor to delete a certain scene in which she depicted the effects on Joan of the judge's demand that she should choose between the sacrament and her loyalty to the voices, as conducive to anti-clerical passion; yet that scene consists of nothing but a close-up of her hands covering her face.

But in *La Dame aux Camélias* she was played right off the stage by another actress. I found myself crying, and turned to my companion and said, "I hope you don't think I'm crying over Falconetti's performance. I'm crying over the performance of Sarah Bernhardt, whom I saw in this part twenty-five years ago when I was a child of ten, whose every movement and inflection I can remember as this woman speaks the lines". And she answered, "Don't you see I'm crying too? And it's for the same reason. And it's twenty-seven years since I saw her". The dead walked on that stage to such effect that when we left the theatre we were excitedly agreeing with each other that it was the starkest and silliest nonsense which the last generation talked when it said that Sarah

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Bernhardt never played any character but herself. Her Marguerite Gautier was full of touches by which she built up the character of a woman who was thoroughly good and at the same time would inevitably have become a *cocotte*. In the death scene, when the doctor came in, one could see her drawing on her last reserves of energy to sit up, to be beautiful for him, to flirt a little with him out of something almost identical with the child's desire to climb on the knees of the adults that are good to it and wind its arms round their necks, causing kindness, perpetuating it, returning it.

When she told him that two of her friends were getting married and said wistfully, "It seems that it is only me who is not going to be happy", she said it interrogatively, as if she thought it possible that he might give her an explanation of her ravaged destiny which would show it as an integral and necessary part of the universe, and that if she could hear it she would no longer rebel against the suffering. Thus exquisitely did she convey the amiability and the supineness of the naïve *cocotte,* who will submit to innumerable embraces, each time in the childish faith that they are going to develop into a relationship full of love and tenderness, who would not revolt against being pushed into a position where the world miscalled her. And she had been building up this impression throughout the whole play, notably in that scene with Armand Duval's father, where she puts up so little fight against society's view that she is a dangerous associate, agrees with such compliancy that if anybody is going to suffer it had better be herself.

* * *

To leave such a vivid impression of subtleties after a quarter of a century, a performance must have been as clear and definite as the most finely cut intaglio. And who cut this intaglio? Who but the worn and febrile Sarah, the banner of her being tattered by her forty years of theatre, wolfish with revolt against the squalor of her early circumstances, with her unceasing fight against the drugs she so loathed and feared and which were far dearer than herself to those who were most dear to her, with innumerable rejections of her heart by lover and child. How did she do it? Wasn't it perhaps her salvation that she was French, and, though doubtless acquiring from her nationality characteristics which we might not consider altogether agreeable, she acquired also a sense of the overwhelming importance of the job? She had to go on acting, and acting as well as she knew how, just as most French cooks consider themselves under an obligation to cook as well as they know how.

I find this sense of the importance of the job making the scenery of French civilization different from that of other civilizations in all sorts of ways. I had an electrifying example once when I rented a villa in a country district in France, with a pleasant garden which was efficiently attended to by a very unpleasant part-time gardener, a rude man, an avaricious man, not nice to his wife or cleanly in his appearance. It afforded me some satisfaction that I was not paying his wages, as my lease deputed that duty to the landlord; until an enquiry as to why he was working either preposterously early or preposterously late elicited the fact that nobody else was paying him wages either. My landlord was a bankrupt and never paid anybody. But, as the gardener explained to me, he had made the garden when the house was built and it was not in him to let it go to rack and ruin; so he tended it before or after having done a whole day's work elsewhere. As against this factor one has to reckon that if a Frenchman does not do something well, he does it almost as badly as is possible for a child of man; so that a foreigner's life in France is spent in alternate rages at subhuman inefficiency and exaltation at superhuman efficiency.

One sees the same force operating over and over again in the sphere of art. Compare,

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for example, the movement which paralleled in France *The Green Hat* movement in England. I have no great admiration for the excessively contemporary muse of Monsieur Paul Morand, who wears on his countenance an unbecoming air of dread in case he has missed some social or literary bus that a prudent young French novelist ought to have caught; and it is surely only by chance that Monsieur Jean Giraudoux (author of the amusing *Bella,* which the Knopfs once published) became a novelist instead of a perfume-maker, or a designer of smart luggage, or of that awful French modernist furniture which exists to show that Euclid too can be common. But they never lost sight of the job. Always they paid respect to literary decorum. In fact, when England wanted to hear pretty stories about wonderful golden girls who could dance all night it did not care what happened to the art of the novel so long as it got its wish-fulfilment fantasies.

But France insisted that those who gave them their pipe-dreams should not violate literary tradition. Hence, though France cannot boast of coming up as England has come up in the last twelve months—there is nothing in the bookshops here to compare with Virginia Woolf's *Orlando,* Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* and Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*—it can at least say that it never was down so far as England was in the years immediately following the war. This same sense of the importance of the job makes the individual artist a more dogged performer than his English or American prototype. Particularly is this observable in women writers. It is impossible to calculate how long or how often Colette Willy would have had to abstain from writing if she had taken as her standard Jane Austen's abstention from literature of seven years as a result of a broken engagement. Instead, she has produced a long shelf of volumes, of which a very fair proportion are little masterpieces.

And this sense of the importance of the job surely accounts for the other example of an artistic sensibility which is utterly exquisite in its responsiveness to reality, yet has left its possessor as calm as if she were tranced in Nirvana. It is hardly just to say that Sacha Guitry's *Maricte* is the only good play in Paris. Monsieur Giraudoux's *Topaze* is at least so much better social satire than anything Lonsdale has written that it makes one blush for England. And *Vient de paraître* has just been taken off, that charming play, by the author of *The Captive,* which I hear has been translated by Mr. Somerset Maugham and Mr. Gerald Haxton. It deals with the complications introduced into French literary life by the award of such prizes as the Goncourt and the *Fémina,* which are not so unlike the complications introduced (or so I understand) into American literary life by the book-buying clubs—though I cannot see an American publisher, wearied by an author's failure to follow up a success he had initiated by being picked by the Literary Guild or the Book-of-the-Month Club, attempting to stimulate his imagination by arranging romantic entanglements for him. Not thus, surely, will Messrs. Simon and Schuster handle Aloysius Horn.

But *Mariette* is certainly the only masterpiece in Paris just now. It is not at all a masterpiece as a written play, but it is a masterpiece of theatre. It tells the story of Napoleon III and the little opera singer at whose villa in Saint-Cloud he led a happy domesticity until the *Coup d'Etat* made him Emperor. In the first act one sees the performance of all the bad operas that ever were, with Louis Napoleon looking owlish in a box and clapping white gloves with increasing intention at Yvonne Printemps, the embodiment of all the minxes who ever yodelled their perfunctory way through opera with a sense that the important harmonies of existence lie not in music but round about the knee and the ankle. In the second act Louis Napoleon comes down to the dressing-room and pays the actors and actresses just

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such stilted compliments as one knows, from Philip Guedalla's *The Third Napoleon* and Maurice Paléologue's *Cavour,* he would have produced on such an occasion. The thing, though light as a feather, is as sound as any of Werfel's ponderous historical plays; and it uses the resources of the theatre much more competently, even, one might say, more seriously. In the act which shows them three years later in the villa at Saint-Cloud, when they were interrupted on state business by King Jerome, it is exquisitely suggested, by the simple expedient of casting as King Jerome the same man who played the King in the bad opera at Amiens in the first act, and giving him much the same sort of music to sing, that while Louis Napoleon took his Mariette from a world of shoddy dramatics he himself is now going to step into a world of very much the same character. So subtly and simply is the reign of Napoleon III thereby suggested that there actually is no need to put any of it on the stage. One knows that the wooden-faced monarch is going to crown himself with paste jewels, parade himself in front of a background of supers and that the result of it all will be confusion and dissatisfaction, as the result of all bad acting is. And that nevertheless he will in his private life (like many a bad actor) be a very decent fellow.

There is no reason why the play should not go on to its specifically theatrical triumph in the last act, which shows Mariette as an old, old lady quavering inaccurately to an interviewer about the night of the *Coup d'Etat.* She gets every detail wrong: tears European history to rags by declaring it was the King of Saxony or the King of Bavaria who was with them; says that the poor wretch, who had in fact swallowed only a few mouthfuls of omelette, ate a hearty dinner, the menu of which she recites with relish (composing it exclusively of the dishes her grandchildren will not let her eat these days); says, with a coquettish look at the reporter, (who, being Sacha himself, is a likely lad) that he spent several hours with her, whereas the poor wretch had staggered out in floods of tears as soon as the King had gone. Then they ask her, "But how did you actually say goodbye?" She says, "I sang to him". "What did you sing?" Astoundingly she raises her weak old voice in the veritable lyric. "Are you sure that's the song?" asks the interviewer, who by this time is fairly doubtful about the whole thing. She straightens herself in her chair, her eyes are shining. She has hold of a clue that leads her back through the labyrinth of time to her youth, *"Oui!"* she sings; and on the one word her voice slowly rises from a quaver to the voice of a girl of twenty, full of certainty, full of ardor, and slowly falls again to age; and the curtain falls with it.

* * *

It is an effect that could not have been given by a novel or a poem, that could be given only by actors and actresses on a stage; and though it be as frivolous as springtime it leaves as clear an impression as the tragic deliberation of the Olympian Sarah. And, like that, it is surely the result of a sense of the importance of the job. Think of what would have happened to a manager in other countries who wrote plays that were as intelligent as *Mariette* is about Louis Napoleon! Inevitably he would have walked out of his theatre, lost his familiarity with his own medium and become a remote intellectual; just as our own Granville-Barker has done. But here Sacha Guitry sits in his theatre and loses not for a minute his hold on the French tradition of the stage which was given him by his father Lucien; contemplate without cease this marvellous instrument, Yvonne Printemps, which his knowledge of the theatre enabled him to find; remember how he endlessly devises means of using her possibilities to make drama, and lives a monastic life of repudiation of all social duties. What sublime management of a talent!

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MARGARET FULLER: CRITIC

by Margaret Wallace

SIFTING literary legends for their grains of essential truth has never been an easy undertaking or one devoid of pitfalls for the prejudiced. In the case of Margaret Fuller, heartily loved and vigorously hated by the most able and articulate of her contemporaries, the task is peculiarly difficult. Indeed, there is something to be said for the legend, itself. It is a rather spectacular and attractive one. It is at least founded upon undeniable fact. If it seems distorted beyond the common run of literary legends it is because the life of its subject was somehow a distorted thing, at variance with the life of the century.

There has been in recent years some sign of a reviving interest in this Margaret Fuller legend or, rather, in the personality, which, since 1850, has been surrounded by a sort of mythological haze of contradiction and caricature. Some of the responsibility for this revival must be laid to Miss Katharine Anthony, whose *Margaret Fuller, A Psychological Biography* stimulated general comment and added a provocative flavor of psychoanalytic inquiry to a subject which might otherwise have been considered exhausted. It would hardly be justifiable, however, to rest the entire burden of this reaction upon so slender a book. The underlying causes are probably far to seek. Perhaps some fresh current of revolutionary or individualistic thought—difficult to define until time and history shall have ordered and simplified the records—has made this clear-headed and rebellious product of Puritanism a sympathetic figure to us, consistent with our motives and measurable by our standards.

The legend of Margaret Fuller, as has been already said, has much to recommend it. The picture left us by her friends is, in every respect, striking. In 1825 Margaret Fuller was an abrupt, overgrown girl with an amazing knowledge of Greek. Upon the question of her personal qualities her observers differ among themselves. Some of them, mainly women, under the spell of her dominant personality, were inclined to endow her with a graceful and prepossessing air. In general it is agreed that she was very plain of feature, with a long, swan-like neck, half-shut eyes, and an irritating habit of blinking rapidly at her auditors when engaged in conversation. Her manner was tactless and outspoken in the extreme.

Her precocity and the unusual extent of her intellectual attainments easily gave rise to the opinion that she was a sexless monster of reason. When she was only a child her father had insisted upon a program of study which was extraordinarily severe even for those uncompromising days. Thomas Wentworth Higginson quotes from one of her letters an account of the fashion in which she spent her days. The fifteen-year-old girl rose at five o'clock, walked for an hour and returned to practise at the piano for an hour before breakfast. After breakfast, which was

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at seven, she read in French Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe* till eight, then Brown's *Philosophy* until half-past nine, then Greek and more practising until dinner. After dinner she read Italian for two hours and then retired to enter the thoughts of the day in her diary. This was the self-imposed routine with which she occupied the summer months. It broke her health, to be sure, but her scholarly attainments were unusual, even unique, among the women of her day, and few contemporary men could have equalled them.

It is not amazing that the Margaret Fuller who led the Boston "Conversations", who wielded an authoritative lorgnette over the group characterized by Harriet Martineau as "gorgeous pedants . . . talking about Mars and Venus, Plato and Goethe, and fancying themselves the elect of the earth in intellect and refinement", should have become known as something of a *précieuse*. The conversation, indeed, had a way of resolving itself into a monologue by Miss Fuller. More extraordinary than her scholarship, and more conspicuous to contemporary observers, were her independence and frankness of mind. Her habit of speech often made this trait uncomfortably evident. Her *Woman in the Nineteenth Century,* which Miss Anthony calls the "first considered statement of feminism in this country", came as a shock to the reticent Boston of 1844. It would have been distressing enough from the pen of a man; from a woman it was unspeakable. Miss Fuller had the temerity and the bad taste to criticize the institution of marriage, to urge the economic and political equality of women and to dilate upon the evil of prostitution. *"Woman in the Nineteenth Century,"* said Poe, "is a book which few women in the country could have written, and no woman in the country would have published, with the exception of Miss Fuller." The indignation with which New England received Margaret Fuller's attacks upon their best-thought-of poets, Longfellow, chiefly, and Lowell, was only slightly less profound. These attacks—judicious criticisms, really—gained authority and currency by their appearance in the *New York Daily Tribune.*

In 1852, two years after Margaret Fuller's death in a shipwreck off Fire Island, a group of memoirs, edited for the most part by W. H. Channing, appeared. With them the documentation of the legend began. These memoirs were compiled from recollections of Margaret Fuller written by persons who had known her—Emerson, Greeley, Clarke, Channing and others. Oddly enough, the contributions of Miss Fuller's European friends, the Brownings, and Mazzini, were mysteriously lost, and the result presented to the public was a pretentious, contradictory and probably censored account of Margaret Fuller as she was known to her contemporaries.

These are the principal factors which have gone to the making of the Margaret Fuller legend. But the whole story is not contained in the presented figure of the Transcendentalist Sibyl, the Radical Feminist, or the Monster of Reason, just as it is not contained in Thomas Wentworth Higginson's story or Katharine Anthony's interpretation. Mr. Higginson presented the facts—as many of them, that is, as his chivalry would permit. Miss Anthony fitted those facts into the cut-and-dried Freudian formula of psychosis. Mr. Frederick Augustus Braun's discussion, *Margaret Fuller and Goethe,* is devoted solely to one side of Margaret Fuller's multifarious personality. It is a very creditable work, in its way, but its usefulness is far from general. These are the chief attempts at reworking and interpreting the material contained in Margaret Fuller's papers and in the Memoirs of 1852. An excellent brief estimate of Margaret Fuller is to be found in Volume II of V. L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought.* It is marred only by a completely uncritical acceptance of Miss Anthony's conclusions. These commentators are at one in a single respect—

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that is, their common tendency to contribute to the Margaret Fuller legend and to discount, or to ignore entirely, the value of the work by which Margaret Fuller might best be remembered. They are not entirely to blame that they have drawn from the mass of evidence only a part of what seems to be the truth, and that they have allowed the chief issue to be obscured by personalities. The total evidence is not readily available. No collection of Margaret Fuller's work has been made, and the republications by her brother of articles from the *New York Daily Tribune* are awkwardly incomplete. Approximately one-third of Margaret Fuller's critical writing is still to be found only in the *Tribune* files from December, 1844, to August, 1846. The most striking of her newspaper articles, it is true, are included in the volumes, *Art, Literature, and the Drama, Life Without and Life Within,* and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century.* But the neglected third contains much which would enhance Margaret Fuller's reputation as a critic, if it could be effectively set forth, and more which would throw a stronger and clearer light upon the nature of her mind and the quality of her penetration. One other factor has very probably contributed to the present obscurity of her work: Margaret Fuller's essays display an unfortunate and quite astonishing lack of stylistic ease or grace or fluency: they are, at times, all but unreadable.

The position which Margaret Fuller, fresh from her experiment with *The Dial,* left Boston to take was no ordinary one. Horace Greeley, whose personality had made the *New York Daily Tribune* America's foremost newspaper, had a vast sympathy with the causes of political and economic revolution. He had followed with approval Margaret Fuller's work on *The Dial* and had also been very much interested by her first published book, *Summer on the Lakes.* Consequently, when Mrs. Greeley offered the suggestion, Margaret Fuller was commissioned to fill the space left vacant in the *Tribune* by the Fourierist, Albert Brisbane. She was thus no ordinary reviewer of books. Her position was one of singular latitude. She was to discuss not only new books, and in particular the flood of American editions of foreign works, but music, drama, projects of philanthropy and any movement in the province of science which happened to catch her fancy.

Purely literary articles formed the major part of her journalistic activity; but of the other fields, musical criticism was the only one in which she was completely insignificant. She never, in her accounts of concert attendance, achieved anything more than a species of disjointed narrative writing characterized by abundant ecstasy.

The decade from 1840 to 1850 was particularly fruitful in pseudo-scientific works of one or another sort. The terms "etherology", "clairmativeness", "psychodunamy" and "animal magnetism" were familiar to every reader of the public prints. Too, America had been stirred by the possibilities for the mechanical conquest of the universe. The steamship *Great Britain* in 1845 crossed the Atlantic in thirty-three days, and the journalists of the day, Margaret Fuller prominent among them, were loud in acclaim. Von Humboldt's *Kosmos,* "the first volume of the physical history of the world", and Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of Creation* had drawn the attention of all scientific minds and paved the way for *The Origin of Species.* No one with Margaret Fuller's varied intellectual enthusiasms, who had such access to the public ear, could have remained silent regarding the phenomena of the changing world. She was, in fact, very vocal; but her utterances, except as they attest the method and quality of her mind, are of interest only to the antiquarian. She had virtually no scientific training and her comments could hardly have contributed much to the advancement of knowledge. Their manner is a valuable commentary upon the

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acuteness of her penetration and the logic of her reasoning. She received with an open mind the published results of experiments in clairmativeness and animal magnetism. It was difficult not to when they were sponsored by the French Academy of Sciences. But she showed herself, at the same time, fully aware of the extent of scientific ignorance upon such matters and declined to be quite convinced by the presumptuous men who give themselves "the air of having taken a degree on this subject". She found herself unable to endure the attitude of religious orthodoxy toward scientific research. The comment upon the American edition of *Vestiges of Creation* is particularly emphatic. "It was no sooner published in Great Britain than those reverend men and women who, with all their professions of honor to God, evince an amazing skepticism as to his power of upholding truth against the invasions of error, stood up, each in his or her place, to hurl anathema against the dangerous man who tried to show that God works by laws." Margaret Fuller's own attitude was truly scientific. "In all cases, before we pronounce we must examine. And even that is insufficient; we must, in our examination, preserve our minds free from prejudice." In these criticisms, at least, one finds not the over-emotionalized hysteria of recent biography but the earnest and inquiring mind which Emerson and Greeley, and even Carlyle—a little reluctantly—recognized.

No doubt Margaret Fuller's chief service to her contemporary readers lay in her scholarly and enthusiastic introductions to the works of European writers. She was by no means alone in this. Almost every memorable name in the early history of American criticism associates itself with some phase of the crusade against insularity. To mention Longfellow, Lowell, Prescott, Tuckerman, Channing, Hedge, Ticknor and James Bayard Taylor is to cite only the obvious examples. Miss Fuller was excellently equipped by taste and training for this task. Very familiar herself with the literature of Europe, she was anxious that America should learn and apply the best that Europe had to offer, without losing the national flavor of its own literary productions. "The honey of Hymettus need not spoil the taste of the American wild bee, but only teach him not to content himself with the coarsest flowers when he might do better."

Nearly one-third of Margaret Fuller's critical writing is concerned with the literature of Europe, some of which she was introducing to the American public for the first time. Usually she announced and discussed the first American edition of a work which had long been current abroad. Most of these articles are judicious and well-considered and almost always they indicate a previous acquaintance with the work in question. Her criticism is notable among the journalism of the mid-Nineteenth Century for the absence of personal gossip, the rigid application of an objective standard of values and, in the treatment of European literature, the abstention from slavish panegyric. It was, apparently, the great temptation of the American critic to be at once over-awed by the culture of Europe and childishly jealous of it. The writings of the lesser journalists fluctuate between uncritical praise of everything European and equally uncritical attempts to establish the complete equality of the contemporary American culture. Margaret Fuller is never to be found at either extreme. Although the range of her critical writing extends from Dante, for instance, to Countess Hahn-Hahn she is never betrayed by prejudice into applying to a mediocre artist superlatives which should be reserved for the greatest. No amount of statement about Margaret Fuller's writing can demonstrate this so well as a few representative examples.

"We hear much lamentation," she wrote in 1845, "at the introduction of so many French novels among us, corrupting, they say, our youth. It would be desirable for

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our people to know something of these writers and the position they occupy abroad." Vigny she felt able to recommend as "unexceptionable and attractive"; but Balzac could not be presented to the American reading public without explanation, especially since she thought that he was destined to be widely read. "He combines the spirit of the man of science," she said, "with that of the amateur collector. He delights to analyze, to classify; there is no anomaly too monstrous, no specimen too revolting to ensure his ardent but passionless scrutiny. But then—he has taste and judgment to know what is fair . . . But he has no hatred for what is loathsome. He is a thorough and willing materialist . . . Taken in his own way we know no modern tragedies more powerful than Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet, Sweet Pea, Father Goriot.*"

The private life of George Sand narrowly escapes suborning Miss Fuller's intellectual integrity. She makes mention of it, but reluctantly, as if it might have been a painful duty which her conscience forbade her to neglect. She contrives, in spite of Sand's character, to be generous to her work, lamenting only her lack of the constructive faculty. "In power, indeed, Sand bears the palm above any of the novelists. She is vigorous in conception, often great in the apprehension and the contrast of characters . . . she wants but little of being a poet, but that little is indispensable. Her best works are unequal; in many parts written hastily, or carelessly, or with flagging spirits. They all promise far more than they perform. But what greatness she has is genuine." She called Eugène Sue a writer of far inferior power to Sand, but one who was, in general, less enslaved by emotion.

Under the title, *English Writers Little Known Here,* Margaret Fuller introduced to her readers Richard Monckton Milnes, Walter Savage Landor, and Julius Hare. This essay was a very careful estimate, embodying representative quotations from each of the authors discussed. She saw them, not as men who wrote for the ages, nor yet as men who wrote merely for the day in which they lived, but as of a class midway between the two, as "audience to the genius and interpreters to the multitude, cultivated friends for those who need such . . . We would introduce them to others that they may find and be found by their own. They need to be thus introduced, for they do not command fame, nor make the earth shake with their tread so that all may know where to find them".

She wrote of the Brownings also, at a time when Elizabeth Barrett was the more famous. She recognized the fact that Robert Browning had not yet attained his full powers, but she urged the attention of the public to *Bells and Pomegranates.* "Robert Browning is scarcely known in this country, as, indeed, in his own; his fame can spread but slowly, from the nature of his works." Elizabeth Barrett commanded rather more space than her future husband. "We . . . cannot hesitate," said Miss Fuller, "to rank her in vigor and nobleness of conception, depth of experience, and command of classic allusion, above any female writer the world has yet known . . . In the *Drama of Exile,* and the *Vision of Poets,* where she aims at a Miltonic flight or a Dantesque grasp her success is far below what we find in the poems of feeling and experience; for she has the vision of a great poet, but little in proportion of his plastic power . . . She is singularly deficient in the power of compression. There are always far more words and verses than are needed to convey the meaning, and it is a great proof of her strength that the thought still seems strong when arranged in a form so Briarean clumsy and many-handed. . . . We must add many blemishes of overstrained and constrained thought and expression. The way in which words are coined or forced from their original meanings does not carry its excuse with it. We find no gain that compensates the loss of elegance and

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simplicity . . . We have thus pointed out all the faults we could find in Miss Barrett, feeling that her strength and nobleness deserve this act of high respect. She has no need of leniency or caution."

As if the business of critical writing were a parasitical matter and he survived who fastened himself upon the lustiest host, most of the American critics of the mid-Nineteenth Century gained whatever permanence of reputation is theirs by treating of the great masters, or by compiling anthologies and thus identifying themselves with the literature of a whole nation. Critics like Lowell and Tuckerman and Channing adopted the former method and, with heads well above the current of popular literature, talked of Milton and Dante and Shakespeare. Griswold and Duyckinck are chiefly memorable for anthologies and cyclopædias. Margaret Fuller had a very slender share in this latter work. She was one of seven editors of a series of publications entitled *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature,* the first of which appeared in 1833. The opportunities for critical writing were none too numerous. Goethe's *Essays on Art* and the prose works of Milton in their American editions afforded some excuse for incursions into the realms of the immortals. The resulting articles bear witness to the quality of Miss Fuller's understanding; but, in the main, she could say only what had been variously said before. In all but fluency and grace of style her treatment of Dante and Alfieri is superior to Lowell's, her background was wider than his and her technical grasp of the subject much clearer.

However great the intellect of the critic, however delicate his perception, he is great, ordinarily, only as he unites in himself the main tendencies of his age. Margaret Fuller's age was, in America, an age of trial and error, of querulous imitation of the old standards, and of groping search for new ones. The steadying hand of the critic was needed as never before. Two qualities were essential to the critic who would identify himself with the advancement of this new and national literature: one, an appreciation of the influences which were at work, the other, an ability to distinguish the permanent from the ephemeral and apply a standard of ultimate values. These qualities Margaret Fuller possessed to a greater degree than almost any other American critic.

With admittedly popular literature, either American or European, she concerned herself no more than the routine of her professional labors demanded. Although her criticisms are always as kindly as possible, her mention of Martin Tupper contains an element of dry, unintentional humor. "This book (*The Crock of Gold*), like others from the same hand, is chiefly remarkable for the purity of moral feeling it evinces." She had no patience at all with the tendency of popular literature to cast itself in emasculated European forms. On the other hand, she was ready to welcome any work, however slender, if it had genuineness and sincerity. "It is thus," she said of Hosmer's *Yonnondio,* "an American literature may grow up; if men will write of what is rooted in their lives, instead of copies from foreign models or ideals which rest only on the clouds above them." This note is still clearer in the brief comment on Seatsfield, the author of *Tokeah: or The White Rose.* "What merit he has is genuine, for he notes down his impressions just as they are received; this merit we must mention wherever we find it—it is so rare at a time when the fear of public opinion and the spirit of imitation make so large a part of our literature hacknied or vapid." Nathaniel P. Willis furnishes an example of the cavalier treatment accorded by Miss Fuller to the echoers of the European spirit. "Mr. Willis is a son of Europe, and his writings can interest only the fashionable world of this country, which, by imitating Europe, fails entirely of a genius, grace and invention of its own . . . We said that these sketches (*Dashes at Life*) would not

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have a permanent fame, and yet we may be wrong. The new, full, original, radiant American life may receive them as an heirloom of this transitive state we are now in, and future generations may stare at the mongrel products of Saratoga, and maidens still laugh till they cry at *The Letter of Ione S. to her Spirit Bridegroom.*"

Margaret Fuller had what was, for her day, the quite unusual courage to press against Henry Wadsworth Longfellow the same charges that she laid at N. P. Willis's door. It is difficult now to appreciate this, for we have apparently lost all sense of that veneration with which the New England poet, then in his thirty-eighth year, was regarded. There is, too, not the slightest indication that Margaret Fuller sought the distinction which falls to the lot of the solitary dissenter. Since she was aware when the book (*Poems* by H. W. Longfellow, 1845) was presented for review that anything she could honestly say would be generally displeasing, she requested Horace Greeley himself to relieve her of the task. This he agreed to do. Later, however, the pressure of events forced Greeley to return the book to Miss Fuller for her comment. There was, as far as we now know, only one other voice in literary America raised against the reverend poet—that was the uncompromising note of Poe. Even Margaret Fuller herself felt constrained to take exception to Poe's charges of plagiarism in a vein which, we may be permitted to suspect, did not do a great deal to mend matters: "Mr. Longfellow has been accused of plagiarism. We have been surprised that anyone should have been anxious to fasten special charges of this kind upon him, when we had supposed it so obvious that the greater part of his mental stores were derived from the works of others". For the rest, she ranked Longfellow in a class midway between the charlatan and the genius. This middle class was "composed of men of little original poetic power, but of much poetic taste and sensibility". She conceded this class its usefulness—that it did much good if the praise belonging to a higher class were not mistakenly bestowed upon it—in educating and developing the poetic sensibilities of others. She could not grant that Mr. Longfellow exhibited any original genius. His mind, she said, was a tastefully arranged museum of garnered good things. He drew all his inspiration from bookish culture, presenting in place of his own thoughts "an undigested collection of the thoughts of others".

It did not need her criticism of Lowell to complete the wrath of New England. Miss Fuller denied to Lowell the poetic gift, saying that his interest in the moral and political questions of the day had substituted for the want of vitality in himself; that his mere facility at verse filled the ear with pleasant sound, but that his thought plumbed no depth and posterity would not remember him. This pronouncement seems not entirely fair until one remembers that, of Lowell's poetry, only the *Class Poem* and the two earlier volumes of his verse had appeared. The most astounding instance of critical blindness Margaret Fuller ever evinced was her failure to estimate Poe above such poets as Bryant—whom she considered the best that America afforded—and Longfellow. In 1845, the year of the publication of *The Raven,* she omitted him entirely from her list of American poets in her article on *American Literature,* which was widely circulated both at home and abroad.

It may seem unfair to attempt any ranking of Margaret Fuller as a critic on the basis of the brief excerpts presented here. But it should be recalled that Miss Fuller was an exact contemporary of the books with which she dealt, and that she had no benefit at all of the perspective which enables us to regard them, perhaps, in a clearer light.

When all is said, Margaret Fuller's enduring reputation must rest, not upon an insubstantial legend, but upon her contribution to the body of American criticism, and upon

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her position in that ill-defined social upheaval known as the feminist movement. The reverberations of the stir created by *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* gave her a wholly exaggerated importance to the latter cause. In reality her opinions were far from radical and would be unlikely to meet the whole-hearted approval of a modern feminist. She did not greatly desire political equality, although she advocated better educational advantages for women and economic opportunity for those who desired it. In commenting upon the cases then arising in England where women took outside employment and the man, whose costlier services were not in demand, stayed home with the children, she said, "We readily admit that the picture of this is most painful—that nature made an entirely opposite distribution of functions between the sexes. We believe the natural order to be the best, and that, if it could be followed in an enlightened spirit, it would bring to woman all she wants, no less for her immortal than her mortal destiny".

As for her criticism, it does not seem too much to say that she was unique in her generation. She strove hardily to overcome the provincialism of America by the introduction of European books, and, at the same time, to encourage the production of a faithful national literature. She brought to this work a wide information and great discriminative powers. More than this—she gave her reader the full benefit of these talents. She never asked to be taken on faith, but submitted full and sufficient reasons for every attitude—a practice which has never been too much in use among professional critics. In her insistence upon a standard of esthetic values Margaret Fuller's work is paralleled only by that of Poe. This emphasis was peculiarly important in an age which too frequently allowed esthetics to be overshadowed by ethical and moral considerations. If her perceptions in such matters were less delicate than those of Poe, they were certainly broader. She was not handicapped by Poe's narrowness of sympathy. Margaret Fuller had the ability of the born critic to "enter into each work in its own kind, and examine it by its own law".

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THE ENGLISH NOVEL

FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH CONRAD

by Ford Madox Ford

IN FOUR PARTS: PART FOUR

TO JOSEPH CONRAD

IN MID-VICTORIAN years there established itself, for all the world to see, the English Novel. Inasmuch as this phenomenon was really, in the last event, combined and, no doubt, unconscious socio-political propaganda, it was accepted by the whole world—by the whole world even more than by England.

Consider, if you will, what images are brought up before you by the words, the English Novel:—there is, to begin with, a Manor House, in which, inevitably, the Best People live; Sir Thomas, amiable but not bright; Lady Charlotte, benevolent, charitable, in an ample crinoline, an Earl's daughter; the Misses Jean and Charlotte, as pure as dew within lily-chalice; Mr. Tom, not absolutely satisfactory; Mr. Edward, always satisfactory; pigeons, shorthorns, a rose garden, a still-room, a housekeeper, a rectory. . . . You will, likewise, see a whole countryside, a whole continent, a whole world so conducted that those amiable but not bright personages shall lead amiable, idle and almost blameless existences in an atmosphere of curtseyings and cap-touchings. It was a world-ideal: you found households modelling themselves upon it in the Government of Kiev, in the State of Massachusetts, in Pomerania, in the Department of the Var. Thus, out of the novels of William Black and others, there came God's Englishman—an Englishman whose moustache drooped, who paraded a crinolined or be-bustled consort, who carried fly-fishing rods and croquet mallets, and this Englishman became the type which the whole world sighingly aped. The novels in which he flourished and to which nobody surely could object were read in Sarajevo as in Potsdam, in Washington as on the Berkshire downs. They were works written for the would-be gentry by the near-gentry which latter, if their works proved sufficiently acceptable, might almost aspire to such establishments as they described and, in the second generation, to authentic gentrydom. The writers themselves, like Shakespeare, would as a rule have to content themselves with a grant of arms from the College of Heralds. But one could always, if one were a novelist, dazzle one's mind with the idea that Edward Bulwer Lytton, author of *The Last Days of Pompeii,* became successively Sir Edward Bulwer and Lord Lytton, and Benjamin Disraeli, also a novelist, Earl of Beaconsfield and favorite of his sovereign.

The "nuvvles", naturally, differed in subject and even sometimes in treatment. *The Woman in White* was, I think, written in letters, for all the world like *Clarissa; Henry Esmond,* which led to the founding of a county-family in Virginia, was autobiographical; or you might have several characters, each speaking in solid autobiographical

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wads, or several diarists. There was, in fact, no literary convention in particular; there was only the point of view. *Romola* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* had to be recognized as of the same ethical family as *Pelham* or *Lorna Doone* or they would not do at all.

Occasionally disturbing breaths swept across the trout-ponds. The newest novel of Thackeray might cause a great deal of trepidating discussion under the breath or the latest passionate outpouring of Dickens might cause mamma to ask dear papa whether Lucy and Evelyn ought really to be allowed to read it. Steerforth and "little Em'ly" came *very* near the Knuckle; but the lap-dog died in the midst of tearful lamentations and the first heroine, very, very delicately. Moreover, refined retribution overtook alike Steerforth and the young woman, in consequence of which *David Copperfield* was put on the index of the young ladies' boudoir. It followed, naturally enough, that *Bleak House* which "introduced Society" could not be kept from the fair denizens of that be-chintzed sanctuary. I believe, however, that *Great Expectations,* the last of Dickens's works to show his passionate compassion for the under-dog, had a pretty rough passage.

I came into the world myself at about the heyday of this national phenomenon but, by the time I had any real literary consciousness, its supremacy was beginning to be challenged. My own mother enjoined on me the reading of *Silas Marner, The Mill on the Floss, Wuthering Heights, Sidonia, The Sorceress, Lorna Doone, The Woman in White, The Moonstone, Diana of the Crossways* and *Far from the Madding Crowd.* But, then, my mother was "advanced" and never wore a crinoline. My father thought Dickens was vulgar, though he did not forbid the reading of his novels, but he certainly deprecated my expressing any enthusiasm for *Bleak House.* He thought, too—I don't know why—that Robert Louis Stevenson was meretricious, except for *An Inland Voyage.* When I was about seventeen, my grandfather, who was considerably more "advanced" than either my father or my mother, first recommended me to read *Madame Bovary, Tartarin de Tarascon* and *Tartarin sur les Alpes.* He was pleased when at school they gave us the *Lettres de mon moulin* of Daudet and made me read *Roderick Random, Humphrey Clinker, Snarleyow, Midshipman Easy,* Waterton's *Wanderings in South America,* which was all the same as a novel.

My uncle, William Rossetti, gave me *The Castle of Otranto, Caleb Williams, Frankenstein* and Meinhold's *The Amber Witch.* I inherited from my uncle, Oliver Madox Brown, a large number of translations from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Spanish. Trollope I had to find out for myself, oddly enough. I suppose my own family were too advanced to care to advocate the reading of projections of the lives of the cathedral clergy . . . At any rate, that was the reading of a boy of from twelve to eighteen of fairly advanced family in the 'eighties of last century. With the possible exception of Wilkie Collins's two books, it will be observed, these were all works that would not normally be read in middle-class families, either because of social outspokennesses, individuality of outlook or difficulties of style. But, even for my family, it was possible at that time to go too far. I remember my mother being seriously perturbed because, at the age of thirteen or so, I was kissed at a tea-party by Mrs. Lynn Lynton whose gleaming spectacles certainly frightened me and whose novels advocated the Revolt of the Daughters of that day. If, moreover, it had lain within the ideas of right and wrong of my family to forbid anyone to read anything, I should certainly have been forbidden to read the works of Rhoda Broughton, who advocated the giving of latchkeys to women.

Nemesis was by then on the way.

The newer ideas began with the cheapening of the products of the press and I daresay

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that cheapening was a good deal hastened by the pirating of American works. I remember still my first delight in the shilling edition; it was bound in scarlet paper and caught my young fancy—I was only fourteen. In this edition, I purchased, in a place called Malvern Wells, Artemus Ward's *Among the Mormons,* Sam Slick's *The Clockmaker,* Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi,* Carleton's *Farm Ballads* and ever so many other American books which I suppose must have been pirated or they could scarcely have been sold for a quarter . . . Though I was ready, upon being importuned by my family, to read Lope de Vega or Smollett, nothing would have induced me to spend sixpence on taking out from a circulating library the three-volume novels of William Black, Besant and Rice and the other purveyors of the nuvvle when by saving up my pocket money I could buy for a shilling, or ninepence net, the *Bigelow Ballads* or *Hans Breitmann.*

It will be seen from this that I really know very little of the commercial novel of those days. There is, indeed, very little about it that anyone need know. That it existed in great numbers, three volumes to the novel, was obvious. In every little town in England there was in those days a circulating library and in every circulating library were shelves on shelves of obfuscated bindings but even the literary textbooks of today give you no more names for the Victorian period than Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, the Brontës, Charles Kingsley, Robert Louis Stevenson, who died in 1894, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. The official list is rather meagre and if I rack my brains really hard I cannot add many names to it. I have already given you Black, Blackmore, Besant and Rice, who collaborated, and, of writers of some merit, Mark Rutherford and Samuel Butler, but neither of these really belongs to the period. Jane Austen really precedes it, though we may well say that she originated the novel of the country house that was followed, at great intervals, by the swarm of commercial writers.

That all the commercial writers who solidly turned out solid three-deckers produced absolute rubbish need not be assumed. Miss Braddon, authoress of *Lady Audley's Secret,* did honest, sound journeyman's work, year in, year out, during a very long life—and obviously such a writer as Mrs. Gaskell will not ever be entirely forgotten, if only on account of *Cranford.* I wish, myself, that more weight attached to her *Mary Barton,* a grim and, indeed, an extraordinarily painful account of Mid-Victorian labor troubles.

Then, of course, there is Trollope.

Trollope and Miss Austen, like Shakespeare and Richardson, stand so absolutely alone that nothing very profitable can be said about them by a writer analyzing British fiction and searching for traces of main currents of tradition. They were both aloof, engrossed, contemplative, masterly. It is possible, therefore, to say that some people prefer *The Warden* to *Framley Parsonage* and *Sense and Sensibility* to *Pride and Prejudice* and that others think the reverse but beyond this there is very little to be said. These, at least, are authentic writers: they neither flare out into passages that are all super-genius, as in Dickens's passage about the dry leaves at Mr. Pecksniff's back door, nor do they descend to the intolerable banalities of the endings of *Copperfield* or *Vanity Fair.* As in the case of Turgenev, however, the aspiring writer can learn very little of either Trollope or Miss Austen. These novelists write well, know how to construct a novel so as to keep the interest going with every word until the last page but, after that, you can only say that they were just temperaments, and quiet ones at that. Inimitable—that is what they are. You could imitate Oscar Wilde but never Trollope, giving you the still, slow stream of English country and small-town life. Nor could anyone else ever give you such pure agony of interest and engrossment as you can get out of the financial

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troubles of the poor clergyman in *Framley Parsonage*. I shiver every time that I think of those few pounds.

Once these tributes are paid, it is astonishing to look back on the course of the novel in England from the earliest times to, say, 1895 . . . Bunyan, Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and then the few Victorians of whom we have been treating. It is an astonishingly small crop, even if you let me add Marryat and then add for yourselves the other solitary figure of Mark Twain, one of the greatest prose writers the English language has produced.

In the meantime, across the Channel, the main stream of the novel pursued its slow course.

It had begun with Richardson. His vogue with the French would be incomprehensible if we were not able to consider that the French Revolution was, in the end, a sentimental movement, basing itself on civic, parental, filial and rhetorical virtues. If the French beheaded Marie Antoinette it was in order that Monsieur Durand, stay-maker of the Passage Choiseul, might be sufficiently well fed to utter tearful homilies to his children. Such homilies uttered by starving peasants, with their bones pushing through their skins and their rags, would little impress their children with the solid advantages of virtuous careers. The moment you consider pre-revolutionary France from this angle, the appeal of the author of *Pamela* becomes clear.

At any rate Diderot wrote *Le Neveu de Rameau* as a direct imitation of that work of Richardson and a whole school of the contemporaries of Diderot imitated *Le Neveu de Rameau*. The influence, again, of Richardson is plainly visible in Chateaubriand for, without Richardson, how could he have written long passages like: "How sad it is to think that eyes that are too old to see have not yet outlived the ability to shed tears", and the like. Further, if the Richardsonian influence upon Stendhal does not so immediately spring to the eye, we know from Stendhal's letters that it was extremely profound.

It was to Diderot, and still more to Stendhal, that the novel owes its next great step forward. That consisted in the discovery that words put into the mouth of a character need not be considered as having the personal backing of the author. At that point, it became suddenly evident that the novel, as such, was capable of being regarded as a means of profoundly serious and many-sided discussion and, therefore, a medium of profoundly serious investigation into the human case. It came into its own.

It is obvious, of course, that before the day of Diderot authors had put into the mouths of their characters sentiments with which they themselves could not be imagined to sympathize. But that was done only by characters marked "villain", all the sympathetic characters having to utter sentiments which were either those of the author or those with which the author imagined the solid middle-classes would agree. Young Mr. Blifil, Mrs. Slipslop and the rest might say very wicked things but they themselves were so obviously wicked and absurd that no one could take them with any seriousness either as pronouncements or as anything that could represent the author's views. Mr. Allworthy or Amelia Dobbin, on the other hand, could never utter anything without the reader having to exclaim: "*How* virtuous!" . . . . Consider, too, the material success that always awaited the virtuous!

By the time the thirty years or so that stretched between 1790 and 1820 had impinged on the world, it had gradually become evident, on the Continent at least, that many differing codes of morality could synchronize in the same era, in the same nation and even in the same small community. It had become evident that if Simeon Stylites and Oliver Cromwell were saints, Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha and several Chinese philosophers were very good men. The novel, therefore, if it was at all to express its

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day, must speak through figures not amateurishly blacked like Uriah Heep nor totally whited like the Cheeryble Brothers.

Changes in literary methods are brought about very slowly and permeate more slowly still into the taste of the more or less unlettered classes who make up the bulk of the desirable readers for an author. As a rule, the process begins with the younger writers who find tiresome or ludicrous the accepted work of their day; a little later the more experienced of readers, tiring in their turn of accepted methods in the works they consume, turn with relief to the younger writers, the professorial and established critics thundering violently against the younger schools. Everywhere but in England schools establish themselves as soon as restlessness betrays itself in artistic circles. A taste for the newer modes is spread abroad by the more experienced readers, in spite of the critics, among that more numerous class, the relatively unlettered. At first, the larger class become converts, then the professional critics, whose bread and butter depend on their following the public taste. So a school is established and for a time holds its own. Then it gives place to other modes.

That is the invariable process with all the products and all the methods of all the arts. Naturally, however, as the arts grow older, their practitioners have a better chance of evolving newer and sounder methods since the number of their predecessors has steadily increased. Bunyan must evolve his method for himself; Defoe could study Bunyan; Richardson, Bunyan and Defoe; Diderot, Richardson and his predecessors; Stendhal could draw on the experience of four generations; Flaubert on that of five; Conrad on that of six. This, of course, is a source of danger to weaker brethren for in each generation an enormous amount of insipid art is turned out by inferior students receiving their instruction at the hands of academic instructors. That cannot be helped. But the fact remains that the study of the methods of his predecessors is invaluable to a master possessed of genuine individuality. Anyone at all instructed, reading the work of Conrad, must find evidence of an almost life-long and almost incredibly minute study of writers preceding him. The amount of reading and of study (they are not the same thing) that must have gone to the making of the author of *Ulysses,* who is certainly the greatest of all virtuosos of the word—that beggars the imagination!

Thus, it happened that the hitherto despised novel found a place of dignity in France from, say, the 'fifties to the early 'nineties of the last century. In consequence, you very speedily found an accepted convention—for, once an occupation is found to be dignified, you will very soon find that investigators of methods are at work upon it. The game of marbles was in my heyday regarded as an occupation solely for little boys but, with the institution some few years ago of an international championship, it came in for the most serious of study by grown men and the photographs of this year's world-contest, that filled the public prints a little time ago, showed competitors who were white-headed, gray-bearded or very rotund of figure. The champion was eventually found, as far as I can remember, in a gentleman of sixty and over.

So with *Le Rouge et le Noir* it became evident to the world that the novel of discussion or of investigation was a possibility and, with that discovery, the great novels began to come. The discussions to be found in the very few works of fiction by Diderot were naturally experimental and amateurish. Like Richardson, he was tremendously on the side of the more or less patriarchal and civic angels. Nevertheless, he could give you a parasite talking in favor of his profession or a rogue justifying his course with a sincerity and a reasonable ingenuousness that differed extremely from the exaggerated speeches of the villains of the Fielding, the Dickens or the commercial-nuvvle schools.

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Stendhal, on the other hand, being what one might call a cold Nietzschean (or it might be more just to say that Nietzsche was a warmed up Stendhalean) Stendhal, then, swung the balance rather to the other extreme, tending to make his detrimentals argumentatively masterly and his conventionally virtuous characters banal and impotent.

At any rate, with or after Stendhal, it became evident, if the novel was to have what is called *vraisemblance,* if it was so to render life as to engross its reader, the novelist must not take sides either with the virtuous whose virtues cause them to prosper or with the vicious whose very virtues drive them always nearer and nearer to the gallows or the pauper's grave. This should not be interpreted to mean that the author need abstain from letting his conventionally virtuous characters prosper to any thinkable extent. However scientifically the matter be considered, material, if not intellectual, honesty, sobriety, continence, frugality, parsimony and the other material virtues will give any man a better chance of fourteen thousand (pounds or dollars) a year than if he should be, however intellectually honest, financially unsound or a drunkard or a dreamer or one who never talks about the baths he takes. The publisher, in fact, has a better chance of both terrestrial and skyey mansions than the novelist.

Nevertheless, the novelist must not, by taking sides, exhibit his preferences. He must not show his publisher as all shining benevolence and well-soaped chastity without pointing out that his fellows, the unwashed, incontinent, wastrel Villons of the world, sometimes practise Robin Hoodish generosities and sometimes smooth with their works the pillows of the agonized and sleepless. In between the starving Chatterton and the august house of, say, Longman, Norton, Hurst Reece and Company, who did not publish Chatterton, he must place and set in motion the teeming world of average, sensual, kindly, cruel, honest, imbecile human beings whose providentially appointed mission would seem to be to turn into the stuff that fills graveyards. It is, indeed, not so much the function of the novelist to hold the balance straight as, dispensing with all scales or instruments for measuring, to show all the human beings of his creation going about their avocations. He has, that is to say, to render and not to tell. (If I say: "The wicked Mr. Black shot nice Blanche's dear cat!" that is telling. If I say: "Black raised his rifle and aimed it at the quivering, black-burdened topmost bough of the cherry tree. After the report a spattered bunch of scarlet and black quiverings dropped from branch to branch to pancake itself on the orchard grass!" that is rather bad rendering, but still rendering. Or, if I say: "Monsieur Chose was a vulgar, coarse, obese and presumptuous fellow", that is telling. If I say: "He was a gentleman with red whiskers that always preceded him through a doorway", there you have him rendered . . . as Maupassant rendered him.)

It was Flaubert who most shiningly preached the doctrine of the novelist as creator who should have a creator's aloofness, rendering the world as he sees it, uttering no comments, falsifying no issues and carrying the subject (the Affair) he has selected for rendering, remorselessly out to its logical conclusion.

There came, thus, into existence the Novel of Aloofness. It had even in France something of a struggle for that existence and the author of *Madame Bovary,* which was the first great novel logically and, indeed, passionately to carry out this theory, had to face a criminal prosecution because in the opinion of the government of Napoleon III a book that is not actively on the side of constituted authority and of established morality is, of necessity, dangerous to morals and subversive of good government.

That view is still largely entertained by the academic critics of Anglo-Saxondom. It is, of course, imbecile but it is not without a

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certain basis in the sentiments of common humanity. It is normal for poor, badgered men to desire to read of a representative type who, as hero of a book, shall triumph over all obstacles with surprising ease and as if with the backing of a deity. In that way they can dream of easy ends for themselves. They will, in consequence, dislike authors who do not side with their own types. As constituted governments and academic bodies are made up of what the French call *hommes moyens sensuels,* such corporations will do what they can to prevent novelists from not taking sides with agreeable characters.

To the Theory of Aloofness there was added, by a very natural process, the other theory, that the story of a novel should be the history of an Affair and not the invention of a tale in which a central character, with an attendant female, should be followed through a certain space of time until the book comes to a happy end on a note of matrimony or to an unhappy end represented by a death. This latter practice, characteristic of the earlier novelist and still the normal expedient of the novel of commerce or of escape, is again imbecile, but again designed to satisfy a very natural human desire for finality. We have a natural desire to be beguiled into thinking that life will finally bring nice, agreeable persons like ourselves to that delectable stage characterized by an admirably planned villa, a sempiternally charming, yet changing companion, a sufficiency of bathrooms, automobiles, victrolas, radios and grand pianos—these trifling additions having meanwhile established us well in the forefront of that class to which we hope to belong. Thereafter, there remain only the long, uneventful, fortunate and effortless closing years of our lives. The desire to be beguiled into this belief is all the stronger because, upon close examination into the lives of our fellow human beings, we find practically nothing of the sort ever happens to them. So we say: "Life is too sad for us to want to read books that remind us of it!"

This is the justification for the Novel of Aloofness, which renders not the arbitrary felicities of a central character, but the singular normalities of an Affair. Normal humanity, deprived of the possibility of viewing either lives or life, makes naturally for a pessimism that demands relief either in the drugs of the happy endings of falsified fictions or in the anodynes of superstition, one habit being as fatal to the human intelligence as the other. Yet, there is no more need to entertain the belief that life is sad any more than there is any benefit to be derived from the contemplation of fictitious and banal joys. The French peasant long ago evolved the rule that life is never either so good or so bad as one expects it to be and so the French peasant, like every proper man, faces life with composure and reads *Madame Bovary,* while the English lawyer, for instance, has never got beyond *The Three Musketeers.*

The progress from the one to the other is simple and logical enough. If you no longer allow yourself to take sides with your characters, you begin very soon to see that such a thing as a hero does not exist—a discovery that even Thackeray could make. From this point to the realization that it is not individuals that succeed or fail but enterprises or groups, it is a very short step. Immediately there suggests itself the other fact that it is not the mere death and, still less, the mere marriage of an individual that brings to an end either a group or an enterprise. It is perhaps going too far to say that *no* man is indispensable but it is far more usual to find, when a seemingly indispensable disappears for one reason or another from an enterprise, that the venture proceeds with equanimity and very little shock. In my time I must have been acquainted with something of the affairs of a hundred journals or periodicals at least, each of them of necessity more or less autocratically conducted. Yet, after he has got the periodical of his founding running for a month or two, the most autocratic of editors makes a discovery:

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it is the periodical that has taken charge. Even when the most noted of editors suddenly dies, his paper, in the immense majority of cases, goes on running in perfect tranquillity and with no apparent change for a period sufficiently long to make it manifest that the great man was not in the least indispensable. This is the most notable fact of journalism.

As with newspapers, so with nearly all the other enterprises of life. I am not, of course, saying that no great man exists or no founder of great enterprises, and there is no particular reason why the serious novelist should not select the Affair of a successful individual for treatment. He seldom does so, however, because, having studied the cases of successful men, he is likely to come to the conclusion that they are neither edifying as histories nor psychologically interesting. Alexander, that is to say, may have sighed for new worlds to conquer, but it is probable that he would have bartered several of his empires for the certainty of a little peace at his own fireside and an improved digestion.

Flaubert, then, gave us *Madame Bovary,* which may be described as the first great novel that aimed at aloofness. It did not succeed in its aim, Flaubert being in the end so fascinated by his Emma that, beside her and the ingenuous weakness of her genuine romanticism, every other character in the book is either hypocritical, mean or meanly imbecile. That it did not succeed in that aim is not to be wondered at when we consider the great, buoyant and essentially optimist-figure that he was. Indeed, all authors being men, it is very unlikely that the completely aloof novel will ever see the light. If you want to be a novelist you must first be a poet and it is impossible to be a poet and lack human sympathies or generosity of outlook. In *L'Education sentimentale* (which I should call the greatest novel ever written) the author of *Madame Bovary* gave us a nearly perfect group novel, written from a standpoint of very nearly complete aloofness. In *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* abandoning as it were human measures of success and failure, he takes as his hero the imbecility of co-operative mankind and as his heroine the futility of the accepted idea and, being thus as it were detached from the earth and its standards, he could draw, in Bouvard and his mate, two of the most lovable of human beings that ever set out upon a forlorn hope. He died in the attempt.

The Flaubert school or group lasted sufficiently long in France, though, after the late war, its influence was completely washed out by a sort of eclecticism whose main features it is very difficult to trace and into whose ramifications I do not intend to enter for it has had practically no time to influence the work of Anglo-Saxon novel writers. Flaubert, Maupassant, Turgenev, the Gourmonts, Daudet and the rest of those who had their places at Brebant's died in their allotted years, the last survivor of any prominence being Anatole France, whose death was greeted by an outburst of furious hatred in France such as seldom greets the passing of a distinguished figure. That was because the French, young, saddened and rendered starving by the war which just preceded France's death, turned with loathing from the rather debonair aloofness of the author of *Histoire contemporaine.* Indeed, if we Anglo-Saxons had suffered in the least as much as those Latins, I might well expect to find myself lynched for writing what I have done above. I have seldom witnessed anything to equal the dismay of a great French gathering of *littérateurs* when their honored guest, an English novelist of distinction and, indeed, of internationally public literary functions, told them in quite immaculate French that all he knew of writing he had from France and that all he had from France he had learned from the works of . . . Guy de Maupassant! If he had gone round that great assembly and had, with his glove, flicked each one of the guests in the face, he could not have caused

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greater consternation. . . . Nevertheless, it is true that Maupassant must have had more influence on the Anglo-Saxon writer of today than any other writer of fiction, Henry James possibly excepted.

In England, meantime, slightly before the 1890's, the solid vogue of the three-volumed nuvvle of commerce, as well as somnolent rumination thereupon, had been seriously threatened by the slow spread of the idea that writing might be an art, by a tremendous drop in the prices at which books might be sold and by revolutionary attacks on Victorian conventional morality. The loosening in morality need not concern us except in so far as it shook the idea that the novelist must, of necessity, color all his characters with one or the other hue, but the drop in the price of books facilitated at least all sorts of experimental adventures. While the nuvvle remained a thirty-shilling three decker, publishers must needs play for safety, whether in morals or methods. To illustrate, neither the "Hill-top" novels of Grant Allen, which were pseudo-scientific attacks on conventional morality, nor yet *Almayer's Folly,* which was an attempt to introduce the artistic standards and methods of Flaubert into Anglo-Saxondom, could have had even the remotest chance of publication had the novel remained at its former price.

On the other hand, such writers as Wilde, Stevenson, Pater and Meredith, with verbal felicities or infelicities, did begin rather vaguely to perceive that writing was an art. Neither Wilde nor Pater were novelists in the sense of devoting the greater part of their time or energies to the art of fiction and Stevenson remained an avowed moralist while Meredith devoted himself to large national aspirations which have nothing to do with art. The four of them, as I have said, were stylists rather than anything else. When Pater, Wilde or Meredith had succeeded in a passage in showing what clever fellows they were, they were satisfied. Stevenson, if he had some conception of how to tell a story, was far more gratified if he had succeeded in producing a quaint sentence, with turns of phrase after the manner of Sir Thomas Browne, than intent on the fact that every sentence (nay, every word!) should carry on the effect of the story to be told.

Nevertheless, these men were pioneers. It would be an ungracious thing to ask more of them. As writers, their concern was, eventually, with manner rather than matter or morals. As men, their concern was, primarily, writing rather than social good form. They deserve and they have our gratitude.

Their propaganda, as well as their achievements, was responsible for an extraordinary outburst of technical effort, though there were other factors which also contributed. There was, for one thing, the cheapening of books. Then, too, there was the French example of how things should be done, but latterly impinging on Anglo-Saxon shores. The idea that writing was an art and, as such, had its dignity, that it had methods to be studied and was, therefore, such another acknowledged craft as is shoe-making—such ideas acted for a time, in the days of *The Yellow Book,* like magic on a whole horde of English and, still more, of American writers. (Incidentally, it will be remembered, it was not until the late 'eighties that Flaubert, Maupassant and Turgenev produced any overwhelming impression in either England or the United States.)

I have not here the space to go with any minuteness into the history of *The Yellow Book* period. Founded by two Americans, Henry James and Henry Harland, in London where circumstances were certainly more favorable than they would have been in, say, New York or Boston, *The Yellow Book* did undoubtedly promote an interest in technical matters that hardly any other periodical or movement could have done. James was a direct pupil of Turgenev. Harland and most of the contributors to the periodical were products rather of a general "Frenchness" than the students of any one author—the

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products of a blend of Mallarmé, Mérimée, Murger and Maupassant and a Quartier Latin frame of mind and personal untidiness.

Its defect as a movement was that its supporters probably aimed rather at displaying personal cleverness than at the concealment of themselves beneath the surfaces of their works. They had not yet learned the sternest of all lessons: the story is the thing, always the story and, again, the story, and that there is nothing else that matters in the world.

THE LAST QUARTER OF A CENTURY

When the dust of *The Yellow Book* period died away with the trial and disappearance of Wilde, there did, nevertheless, remain in the public and the literary mind some conception that novel-writing was an art and that the novel was a vehicle by means of which every kind of psychological or scientific truth connected with human life and affairs could be very fittingly conveyed. Today I imagine there would not be many found to deny that it is the vehicle by means of which those truths can be most fittingly investigated. To that we may some day return.

In the meantime *The Yellow Book* period had left behind it three men whose names must forever stand out for the student of the history of the English novel. They were Henry James, Stephen Crane and Joseph Conrad. I do not purpose here to attempt an estimate of any one of the three; I merely wish to point out what it was that distinguished them from all of their predecessors and nearly all of their distinguished contemporaries. Their distinguished contemporaries are all, most fortunately, still alive and so beyond the reach of my pen—but it must, I imagine, be fairly obvious that, say, Mr. Wells, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Galsworthy or Mr. Arnold Bennett are solitary figures, ploughing lonely furrows and expressing their admirable selves in admirable ways known only to themselves.

About that other triad there were a certain solidarity, a certain oneness of method and even a certain comradeship. They lived in the same corner of England, saw each other often and discussed literary methods more thoroughly and more frequently than can ever at any other time in England have been the case. To be sure, not one of the three was English.

Indeed, some ten years or so ago my friend, Mr. Wells, wrote to the papers to say that in the first decade of this century a group of foreigners occupied that corner of England and were engaged in plotting against the English novel. At the time, this appeared to be the sort of patriotic nonsense that occupied our minds a good deal after the war but Mr. Wells, as usual, was right. The extent of the conspiracy was this: the works of those three writers, whose influence on the Anglo-Saxon and even, to some extent, on the British novel was overwhelming, were united by a common technique and their literary aims were to all intents exactly the same.

All three treated their characters with aloofness; all three kept themselves, their comments and their prejudices out of their works and all three rendered rather than told. On the whole, those characteristics which never before characterized the English novel characterize it today. That is, no one would today set out to capture the suffrages of either the more instructed or of even the almost altogether naïve with a novel of the type written by the followers of Bunyan, Defoe, Fielding, Charles Reade or William Black. No author would, like Thackeray, today intrude his broken nose and myopic spectacles into the middle of the most thrilling scene he ever wrote, in order to tell you that though his heroine was rather a wrong 'un his own heart was in the right place.

James, Conrad and Crane differed from each other in minute points and, indeed, in

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broader characteristics. James was more introspective, Crane more incisive in his writing, Conrad more clearly approached the ordinary definition of the poet and was less remorselessly aloof than either of the others. Their common Gallic origin, however, united them: their strongest passion was the desire to convey vicarious experience to the reader. Conrad wrote of his literary aim: "It is above all to make you see" and Crane might have written the same thing had he ever written about himself. Henry James might have written, if he could ever have brought himself to write anything so unqualified about his aims: "It is above all to make you feel!" At any rate, the common aim was to take the reader, immerse him in an Affair so completely that he was unconscious either of the fact that he was reading or of the identity of the author, so that in the end he might say and believe: "I have been in a drawing room overlooking Boston Common, in a drinking saloon in Yellow Sky or beneath the palm leaves of Palembang! I *have* been!"

At this aim, to which they certainly attained, they arrived by certain technical devices or rules. Most of these I have already foreshadowed and, as I am not here writing a technical work, I do not propose to go into the others at all closely. The only sound, technical rules are those that are founded on a study of what pleases: if what you write is to please, you must see how your predecessors did it. There can be nothing either highbrow or recondite about your efforts; the nearer you are to your fellowman who differs from you only in not having literary ambitions or gifts, the nearer are you to universality; the nearer you are to universality, the greater you are, the more nearly you will have justified your existence.

You must, therefore, write as simply as you can and you must write of subjects that spring at your throat. Why subjects appeal to you, you have no means of knowing. The appeal of the subject is, nevertheless, the only thing that is open to your native genius —the only thing as to which you can say: "I cannot help it: that is what appealed to me!" You must never, after that, say: "I write like this because I want to", but you must say: "I write like this because I hope it is what the unspoiled reader likes!"

Having got your subject, you will, if you are prudent, live with it for a long, long time before you sit down to write it. During that time, you will be doing at odd moments what Conrad used to call "squeezing the guts out of it". For it is a mistake to think that what looks like the rendering of an ordinary affair is ever an artless chronicling. Your "subject" may be just the merest nothing in the way of intrigue or plot but to the merest nothings in human affairs all the intrigues of the universe have contributed since first this earth swung away, a drop of molten metal, from the first of all principles. Your "subject" might be no more than a child catching frogs in a swamp or the emotions of a nervous woman in a thunderstorm, but all the history of the world has gone to putting child or woman where they are and up to either subject you might lead with an epic as thrilling in its end as that of *Othello* or an episode as poignant with absolute relief as came to the world on the eleventh of November, 1918. You have at your disposal heredity, environment, the concatenation of the effects of the one damn thing after another that life is—and Destiny who is blind and august. Those are the colors of your palette: it is for you to see that, line by line and filament of color by filament, the reader's eye is conducted to your culminating point.

That is, then, all that I have to say of the gradual progress of the English novel, to the point where it becomes the Novel. I have traced out as plainly as I could the lines of the pattern as it appears to me and the reader must use that pattern for what jumpings-off of his own he chooses to make.

That this is not the final stage of the novel

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is obvious; there will be developments that we cannot foresee. Humanity, though it remains stable, changes the world, and there are probably eternal principles for all the arts, but the applications of those principles are eternally changing or eternally revolving. It is, for instance, an obvious and unchanging fact that if an author intrudes his comments into his story he will endanger the illusion conveyed by that story but a generation of readers may come along who would prefer the capers of the author and that generation of readers may coincide with a generation of writers tired of self-obliteration. So you might have a world of Oscar Wildes or of Lylys. You might, again, have a world tired of the really well constructed novel, every word of which carries its story forward: then you will have a movement towards diffuseness, backboneless sentences, digressions and inchoatenesses.

For the moment, however, the outline that I have traced for you seems to have got about as far as we have got.

THE END

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THE RAM

by Robert P. Tristram Coffin

A white ram rears against a wall
  With horns curled close in scorn.
The wall stands firm; but he must butt,
  For that end he was born.

Beyond there are unnibbled fields
  And sheep that ean for young.
Like a hammer forging steel
  His head is reared and swung.

The rhythm of that beating head
  Is built into our hearts
And into the volcanic sun's
  Incandescent darts.

The passion of those bleeding horns
  Is on each star that glows
And on the briefest petallings
  Of a summer rose.

You ram who shape the universe
  And lord who bleed to death,
Your hunger is our being fed,
  Your dying is our breath!

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THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

by Ernest Boyd

As THE season has progressed, louder and louder have become the wails of those who insist that the show business is going to the dogs. The number of dark theatres has been mournfully tabulated. Mr. Whalen, having made the speak-easies safe for their patrons, revised the traffic laws for the special benefit of playgoers. Learned diagnosticians have held forth on the reasons for the theatre's decline. Play after play has opened and closed without leaving even a memory behind. Yet, every good show in town, from "Strange Interlude" to "Follow Thru", is doing good business. From which I conclude that there is nothing wrong with the American theatre, save the absence of first-rate plays. The public still maintains its old habit of going to see what it really likes.

It is, for example, perfectly willing to go as far west as Hoboken in search of entertainment when that offered is better than what Broadway can provide. At Christopher Morley's Old Rialto Theatre the romantic spectacular drama, "After Dark, or Neither Maid, Wife nor Widow", has been giving crowded houses an evening's enjoyment, from which neither the hygienic vistas of the Hudson Tunnel nor the London underground atmosphere of the Hoboken Tubes can detract. The old play is perfect of its kind, and it is produced with all the dignity to which it was accustomed in the 'sixties. If the audience could be persuaded not to demonstrate its sophistication quite so provincially, it would be a help, but even with the ironical hootings and applause this masterpiece of Victorian refinement is rich in dialogue of quaint beauty. Mr. Morley and his associates evidently have no reason to share the pessimism of Broadway.

Neither have the Actor-Managers, who are sponsoring Miss Ruth Draper at the Comedy Theatre. Here is an entertainment which holds its packed audiences enthralled. Miss Draper's genius enables her to compete single-handed and successfully with the most lavish enterprises of rival theatres. Her sketches are little gems of satire, observation and sentiment. Without accessories she can evoke scenes and characters, and in a few words she will tell a story more effectively than many an author whose fame rests upon the claim to depict the life from which Miss Draper so deftly draws her material. Her versatility is so astounding that one is never conscious of her own personality but is captured by the successive personalities which she projects upon the stage. One of her sketches will give in fifteen minutes the essence of a play.

I thought of her, in this connection, as I watched "The Marriage Bed", Ernest Pascal's dramatization of his novel of that name. Portraying a woman at breakfast at three stages in her married life, Miss Draper really says all that Mr. Pascal tries to say in this play. What he has to say is that men are

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often restless at middle age, that the ties of wife and children are more powerful and conquer in the end. What he fails to do is to present dramatically the problem which he raises. Miss Ann Davis gives an excellent performance as the steadfast wife and Mr. Allan Dinehart as the wayward husband, but Miss Helen Flint is not given a chance to show the other side of the conflict, as she at no time indicates the true part she plays in the triangle. So the play moves uneventfully to its foregone conclusion.

After several interesting if not always successful experiments Mr. Elmer Rice has produced a piece of work which promises to be one of the outstanding plays of the season. "Street Scene" is made up of the simplest elements, yet it is full of dramatic intensity and richly varied characterization. Taking a slum tenement on the East Side, with its tenants of varied nationality and humdrum occupations, Mr. Rice has made a drama in which humor and observation combine with imaginative realism, the result being a tragedy not unworthy of a Chekhov or a Gorki. The large cast is well chosen to represent the types concerned, but special mention must be made of Miss Erin O'Brien-Moore's remarkable performance as the daughter whose mother is murdered in her lover's arms.

An amusing comedy, which opened inauspiciously at the President Theatre, is "The Guinea Pig", by Preston Sturges, wherein the author plays with the idea of a writer using an ingenuous youth as material from which to learn enough to write convincingly about love. Miss Mary Carroll brought charm and naturalness to the part of the experimental female, raising it to that Schnitzlerian level below which such conceits are impossible. Mr. Sturges is not a rival of the author of "Literature", but his fancy lies in that direction and this first effort of his was far superior to many of the plays which were brought to New York with more pomp and circumstance.

The Viennese Sil-Vara, of course, is an old hand at such tricks and his "Caprice", produced by the Theatre Guild, is one of that organization's biggest successes. After "Strange Interlude" and "Wings over Europe", it may seem rather flimsy in its frivolous treatment of the sacred claims of parent and child. Miss Lynn Fontanne and Mr. Alfred Lunt, however, are players who can be safely entrusted with this kind of comedy, to which they can lend the glitter indispensable to the handling of such ideas.

"Gypsy", by Maxwell Anderson, on the other hand, despite the good acting of Miss Claiborne Foster, fails because of its rather too serious treatment of a subject more appropriate to comedy. The possible effects upon a daughter of her mother's infidelities are many, but Mr. Anderson has decided to make the gift hereditary, and then to show the erring daughter repentant and disgusted by her own wicked ways, yet very deliberately persisting in them. The character is, somehow, unconvincing, and the woes of that type of woman are not such as to arouse the serious sympathy which Mr. Anderson tries to enlist.

A comedy in the best *Saturday Evening Post* tradition, "Merry Andrew", by Lewis Beach, preached the sterling American gospel of work. Greatly aided by Mr. Walter Connolly, in the rôle of the superannuated man, Mr. Beach unfolded his tale of the degeneration of Andrew Aiken when, at the age of sixty, he decided to give up his drugstore and rest. It was a tale more obvious in the dramatist's telling than is perhaps strictly necessary, for it is, after all, a fact that nowadays even American men of business have learned how to rest or, at least, to play golf. They are not really so resourceless as Mr. Beach suggests. Following the play's languid meanders, I felt that, at the risk of the inevitable smiles of condescension, I might safely say that Lamb's essay on *The Superannuated Man* still satisfied my modest requirements, so far as this theme is concerned.

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Other strange offerings, whose untimely, but surely predictable deaths produced or helped to increase the gloom referred to at the outset of this chronicle, were "Vermont", "Precious" and "The House Unguarded" which demonstrated that a murder committed in Act I can be re-enacted in the next two acts in such a manner as to seem plausible, yet not establish the truth.

Well, as I have often insisted in this place, the plain people as well as the plutocracy never hesitate in the presence of a good musical comedy, however austere the manners of the box-office or how rich the profits of the speculators. There have been several musical shows, ranging from the supreme excellence of "Follow Thru" to the mediocrity of "Polly", which promptly accepted the popular verdict and died. The latter was adorned by the much heralded presence of the English lady who is known succinctly as June. She proved to be quite unequal to the standards expected of musical comedy stars in this country and, as I gazed at her, I knew that the destiny of "Polly" would not be a happy one, although Miss Inez Courtney and Mr. Fred Allen maintained the honorable American tradition.

Based on Stanley Weyman's novel, "The Red Robe", whose dramatization once drove Bernard Shaw to despair, a romantic play with music, of the same name, was offered by the Messrs. Schubert. Miss Helen Gilliland and Mr. Walter Woolf sang their numbers well, and the cloak-and-sword picturesqueness of settings and action proved that Shaw was right. This is the libretto for a musical play, not material for drama. Unfortunately, it gave no indications of rivalling "New Moon", with which it invited inevitable comparison.

"Follow Thru", on the contrary, invited, challenged, and otherwise demanded comparison with any musical show on earth and then won. It is undoubtedly one of the most amusing, tuneful, and attractively staged plays of its kind in the entire annals of musical comedy. All the principals are superlatively good, and the ensemble leaves nothing to be desired. The ingredients for a successful musical comedy have been assembled by masters of that subtle art. Miss Irene Delroy is irresistible, and Miss Zelma O'Neal is impishness jazzed up to the *n*th degree. Mr. John Barker succeeds in being a credible masculine human, and the handsome hero. Messrs. John Sheehan and Jack Haley supply comedy which is unfailing in its humor and apparently inexhaustible. The songs simply compel delight, whether the romantic numbers, such as "My Lucky Star", "You Wouldn't Fool Me", and "If There Were No More You", or Miss O'Neal's grotesque "I Want to be Bad" and the duet with Mr. Haley, "I Could Give Up Anything but You". Mr. Laurence Schwab and Mr. B. G. De Sylva have again deserved well of this great nation.

Mr. Lew Fields offers something nearly as good in "Hello Daddy!" Here the outstanding feature is the number in which Miss Betty Starbuck and Mr. Billy Taylor eccentrically explain in song and dance their desire to care for each other "In a Great Big Way". Miss Mary Lawlor and Mr. Allen Kearns are responsible for the sentimental numbers which are many, catching and well sung: "Let's Sit and Talk About You", "I Want Plenty of You" and "Your Disposition is Mine". Miss Wanda Goll gets an opportunity to be agreeably frenzied in "Futuristic Rhythm", while Mr. Lew Fields and Mr. George Hassell inject humor into the proceedings at opportune moments. The piece will probably share the honors with "Follow Thru" this season, save in the eyes of those who must have their American girls glorified by Mr. Ziegfeld. I would sacrifice "Whoopee" at any time for "Follow Thru".

Thus, one emerges, at the end of another monthly survey, remembering more gratefully the composers than the dramatists. Can it possibly be that they know their business better? Ask the box-offices: they know.

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HENRY WAS RIGHT

by C. E. Ayres

THE ONLY thing we learn from the study of history is that there is no such thing as history: there is only fiction. History is bunk. What is remarkable about this truth is only that it was uttered in three words in a court room by a manufacturer of automobiles and not by a celebrated scholar, in ten thousand words or more, before a solemn convocation of the American Historical Association. The scholars all know that it is true, and most of them have said so—in the decorous periphrasis of ten thousand words or more. They even go so far as to recognize that all historical narrative is bound to be fictional. There is something inevitable about it. By some peculiar defect (or virtue) of imagination, all men, scholars and manufacturers, are tainted with romance. They invent crimes, attribute motives, create master minds and run to earth arch felons. That is to say, they are liars—glorious or sinister as the case may be.

Fictionized biography is a case in point, and no one who is capable of reflection need go further afield for an understanding of historical mentality. It is no accident that the two leading crazes of the modern reading public are for biography and detective stories. The two are one. We have Napoleon and Arsène Lupin; Disraeli and Sherlock Holmes; *The Ugly Duchess* and the *Murders in the Rue Morgue;* Goethe and Philo Vance. Personalized history only serves to assure us that extraordinary things do actually happen: history is stranger than fiction. Victoria and Elizabeth—who are they but *True Story* heroines? The augustness of homely (not to say simple) virtue! The heart-rending Nemesis of unhallowed love!

All this, to be sure, is only the effervescence of historical research. But if we blow off the froth and taste the dark brown ale of scholarship, the beverage is no less exciting to those who have a taste for ale. What is a "fact" of history? This is not the place, perhaps, to follow Professor Becker through the intricacies of his erudite demonstration that a historical fact is at bottom always arbitrary, always selective, always a fictional reconstruction secreted by the imagination of the historian who makes the "synthesis". But we can at least peer about our own historic panorama. What do we know of the past? The greatness of Greece? That was the invention of Plutarch. The fall of Rome? That was Gibbon's idea. *Magna Charta* was reconstructed, almost invented, by Coke. The industrial revolution was coined by Arnold Toynbee. The English "people" was devised by Green. Tacitus was not aware that Rome was falling. Gibbon saw nothing of the industrial revolution. Macaulay never heard of the English people. Bancroft was entirely ignorant of the significance of the frontier in American history, as he died two years before Turner "saw" its extraordinary significance.

Such being the case, we approach con-

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temporary history in chastened mood. What is happening before our eyes? Who can tell? Perhaps we are falling from vertiginous heights and will never know that we have smashed until some faithful scholar of a future day "discovers" this to have been our fate. Or, perhaps, we are the first crude outline—the first rough model of the studio—for such a cultured triumph as will outglory Greece, at least in the golden reconstructions of our future Plutarch. Perhaps we are just entering upon an aristocracy of intellect in which Those Who Know will be also Those Who Do and scientists will be kings; or, perhaps, we are about to realize the Utopia of the brotherhood of man when the workers of the world have at last united and the instruments of production have been completely socialized. And then, again, perhaps not. Perhaps it doesn't matter.

What does matter is that this is a period of perhapses. It is the day of "Whither?" Obviously, no one has answered the question to our satisfaction. In *The Decline of the West, Vol. II* (Knopf, $7.50) Herr Spengler glowers darkly at us from post-war Germany; M. Lucien Romier in *Who Will Be Master, Europe or America?* (Macaulay, $2.50) and M. Julien Benda in *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (Morrow, $2.50) lightly prick our attention with a nervous gesture toward post-war France. Fictionists at heart, all are faithful reflections of a certain age, a certain people, a certain temper. Spengler is heavy, mysterious and vague. Dark portents move across his pages; obscure historical analogies; the sense of awful Nemesis; slow, inevitable ruin. Romier and Benda are bright, lucid and compact with a rapid, energetic logic. Truth poises delicately at the tip of the pen. There are no doubts, no obscurities, no vagueness; only the excusable anxiety of self-conscious quality in a brutally quantitative world.

Like Hegel after Jena, Spengler preaches a doctrine of impersonal, cosmic forces: the historic cycles which Volume I has made sufficiently well known. He works backward and forward through past, present and future, setting forth what events in China, Arabia, ancient Greece, medieval Europe and the modern world have been "contemporary" in the sense of representing the same moment in the universal culture pattern; what have preceded and what, based on analogy, must inevitably follow here as it did there. He is impressive. Any performance is impressive in which the juggler can keep the whole of world history in the air at once, an endless chain of ascending and descending epochs. He is unconvincing. We are not convinced by what we never fully understand. Parables and analogies are amusing and even stimulating. We can be amused by his calling our own age Faustian, because it has bartered its soul; and we may be moved to a certain amount of not unhygienic rumination by his deep rumblings on the reign of money and the dominance of the machine. But what is it all about?

> The bright imaginative Waking-Being submerges itself into the silent service of Being, as the Chinese and Roman empires tell us. [Communicative empires!] Time triumphs over Space, and it is Time whose inexorable movement embeds the ephemeral incident of Culture, on this planet, in the incident of Man—a form wherein the incident life flows on for a time, while behind it all the streaming horizons of geological and stellar histories pile up in the light-world of our eyes . . . The Cæsarism that is to succeed approaches with quiet, firm step . . .

Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching!

M. Romier is troubled by the mass and mechanization of modern life. That is to say, he is a civilized Frenchman; he is seriously annoyed by the American bogeyman; but he is not going to be impolite about it. The question is simply one of mass and machine against quality and culture—quite

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without prejudice to America. It only happens that America embodies sheer, mechanical mass movement. Prohibition illustrates this. "The outstanding fact," as it strikes M. Romier, "is that a nation of 120,000,000 souls overnight learns to accept such a law, which is held to suppress in some measure a normal human need." Under the circumstances we feel that he has done us proud to call us souls. We behave, it seems, much more like robots. "The 'contacts' of a European," as he views himself, "are begun and extended along the lines of family ties, mental or temperamental attunements, chance meetings, attachments through common memories, advancement in one's profession and the extension of one's interests . . . In the United States, however, almost the exact opposite is the case." Americans make friends only with dollars; their social life consists only in being an Elk or a Kiwanis; and they are continually on the move: one year in Chicago, the next in Saint Louis. And so, of course, the Americans have no culture; and Europe's problem is to preserve her "spiritual and traditional institutions" while at the same time adapting herself to "the phenomena of mass-life which threaten to become an overwhelming force from now on and to whose conditions America has already adjusted her own civilization". There is really no question who will be master. Europe will. The only doubt is whether it will be the ancient Europe, the real Europe or an Americanized Europe lamentably adjusted to the phenomena of mass-life. The book, says its American publisher, "is a confidential and earnest exhortation to the best minds of Europe, to witness the example of the new America": a confidence which he betrayed.

The behavior of the professors of all countries under the influence of war emotion has been the subject of numerous attacks and defenses. M. Benda extends the attack to all the professionals of the intellect, whom he calls *clercs,* and to the whole of modern life. The intellectual, he feels, has ceased to be a Socratic citizen of the world and has become a proponent of nationalism, patriotism, class and race antagonism, and in so doing he has committed treason. This assumes, of course, that the class of *clercs* did at some time or other measure up to the ideal of Socrates. At what time, we wonder, did this admirable spirit of detachment so prevail? In the Middle Ages, no doubt, the *clercs* thought in terms of Europe and not in terms of nationalities. But so did the popes. Did the *clercs,* then, think with calm detachment of Christianity? Of the white race? Of the upper classes? In part M. Benda is making war on certain of his colleagues, especially Barrès and Péguy. This is a controversy in which few Americans can take an interest. But what makes M. Benda even more difficult to go along with is the peculiar logic with which he finally sums up his case. Though he speaks for detachment, he is somehow constrained to frown on pacifism: the sentimental pacifism of Montaigne, Voltaire and Anatole France who thought it funny that men dressed in yellow should kill men dressed in blue; the mystic pacifism of Romain Rolland whose horror of war led him to condemn both sides equally and so to say by implication, "I always maintain my country is in the wrong even when it is in the right"; and the pacifism of the pretended patriot who affects to believe that "the nation is not in the least threatened and that the malevolence of neighboring nations is a pure invention of the people who want war". All such weakness M. Benda vehemently deplores. What he speaks for is the calm detachment of the intellectual who, holding himself above the prejudices of race, nation and class, thinks only universal thoughts, avoiding every bias and taking sides only when his natural and manly feelings prompt in his breast the realization that his class, nation or race is in the right.

It is easy, perhaps too easy, to treat one's

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contemporaries as mortal men. Few of the historical fictioneers of recent seasons have yet impressed on us an immortal formula. Mr. Strachey may have lifted the face of Queen Victoria. But in comparison with the great plots of the past—*Magna Charta* or the industrial revolution—M. Benda's treason is only querulous fault-finding; M. Romier's horror of America is only a slight attack of cultural indigestion; Herr Spengler's elaborate analogies, a lot of sentimental German metaphysics, the romance of destruction, Hegel in reverse. Nevertheless, each of these fictions has a certain plausibility. Each is in some sense "true to life". For all we know, civilization may proceed by cycles; for all we know, our own position may be on the downward curve of decadence. Spengler can't prove it. But he has the ring of melodrama underneath the over-stylization of "Faustian culture" and "Cæsarism". What his story needs chiefly to make it "better theatre" (and, therefore, better history) is a hero and a villain. MM. Romier and Benda can produce them. Romier's "heavy" is authentic; and so is Benda's "lead". The menace of mechanization in our culture is real; and so is the hope of intellectual leadership by emancipated minds. What we chiefly lack is a super-dramatist, a master of historic fiction: some one to combine Spengler's perspective and Benda's brush-work; some one to handle Romier's robot bogeyman with Spengler's impersonality; a composite photograph of Tolstoy and Flaubert. In short, another Gibbon.

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FICTION

MEMOIRS OF A FOX-HUNTING MAN

by Siegfried Sassoon (COWARD-MCCANN; $2.50)

WHO does not remember those savage and fastidious poems which came from Siegfried Sassoon, in a bitter trickle as from some deep mental wound, soon after the end of the war? A few years later than Rupert Brooke and the product of a much sadder, more self-searching mind, they were a symbol of the spiritual erosion which took place between the Byronic glories of the war's first years and the utter weariness and despair toward its end.

During the war something was lost to Englishmen which they can recapture in nostalgic memories but never recover in fact. This strange novel of Sassoon (it must be largely autobiographical) reminds one of the faintly faded colors and old-fashioned security of English sporting prints. *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*—it sounds comfortable, out-of-doors, Victorian; it seems to belong on a favorite shelf in a library hung with pictures of beloved horses; it does not suggest the Sassoon of 1917 and 1918. And yet, when you have read it, read between its idyllic lines, smelling of leather and horses and the damp earth of early winter, you realize that Sassoon has performed an extraordinarily subtle and restrained feat. Without saying so in as many words, he shows you, through the absorbed eyes of the fox-hunting man who is to some extent himself, "this happy breed of men, this little world" suddenly sucked into the larger world as one raindrop trembles into others on a window pane. That line of verse on the title-page is almost the only generalization, the only hint, that Sassoon was painting us a picture of something that can never be again.

It is a charming, sober-hued book, full of the peaceful solidities of days spent with ploughed fields, sweating horses and simple friendly men for whom the fox and the hound are all that life holds most worth while. Very quietly, with a tight rein on a rich sharp-edged vocabulary, Sassoon gives us a handful of magnificent portraits, portraits which at first do not strike the eye, but accumulate vitality and grow upon one as would an old family portrait in a dark corner of the room.

There are dullnesses in it, too, and flat, featureless fields of pleasant prose, but one feels it is all done on purpose and that Sassoon avoided a livelier pace because he wanted, above all, to give us the healthy, tingling monotony of the enchanted world where men with red cheeks and small incomes have no desires that are separate from horses and dogs.

There are not many books in which the author has subordinated fact and interest and baits for the shy reader to the maintenance of a single key or mood and, in a minor mode, this is one of the most successful of them.

After many tranquil chapters never very far from the stirrups, the war swallows up our fox-hunting man. But he remains calm to the end, which is hardly an end, but more like a semi-colon. Somehow the healthy

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weariness, the outdoor magic of those years of fox-hunting persist even under bombardment.

There is one astonishingly real character, built up ever so slowly, with hardly a trace of the writer's self-consciousness—that of Denis Milden, M. F. H.

Altogether a singular and a strangely beautiful book.

ROBERT LITTELL

THE LAST SEPTEMBER *by Elizabeth Bowen* (DIAL PRESS; $2.50)

MISS BOWEN'S first book, *The Hotel,* was brilliant; her latest, *The Last September,* is more than clever. Her second book, like the first, is a comedy of manners and of character that deepens almost imperceptibly into something bitterer than comedy and yet keeps throughout a shrewdly ironic view.

The scene of the present story is an Irish estate, Danielstown, presided over by Sir Richard and Lady Naylor, Irish to the heart but aristocrats to the bone. They are in a somewhat awkward situation for, naturally, they are Tories, and it is the time of the guerrilla warfare between Sinn Feiners and the Black-and-Tans. Theirs is a varied and feudal household—Lois, a wildly intelligent niece, Laurence, her coldly intelligent cousin, Hugo Montmorency and his wife Francie, failures at everything but visiting, Marda Norton, a vague relation but a competent egoist. Then there are the guests of a day—officers from the near-by garrison, neighbors and friends. Lois is that type of not impossible she, too consistently delightful to be quite true, which Miss Bowen loves to exhibit to a world whose actual dullness never could have sheltered her. And it is only with Lois that Miss Bowen can be accused of trading a little on our sentiments: for she makes this dazzling creature the ugly duckling of the family and, though our hearts are (designedly) wrung by the spectacle, our heads refuse to believe what we see. Not that Miss Bowen makes a crude bid for our sympathies: twenty-three hours of the day her Lois is merely a whimsical exaggeration of the wise and foolish virgin rolled into one. And at the end, when worldly wisdom, in the person of Lady Naylor, has deemed it expedient to kill Lois's first love, and a Sinn Feiner's bullet has underlined the verdict, the author, by a wise economy, a tact that can hardly be too highly praised, convinces even the cold-hearted Laurence that the ugly duckling has become a swan.

Miss Bowen knows her society (which is of the very "nicest"), especially her ladies. This knowledge she has used not to give us an actual picture—heaven keep us from such dreadful duplications!—but a brilliant sketch, sometimes hilarious, that is the more telling for having an occasional line bitten out with acid.

T. S. MATTHEWS

WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM TARRIED *by Edna Bryner* (DUTTON; $2.50)

IT IS impossible to put into one un-self-contradictory sentence the long and the short of this book. First, it will have to be said that this is one of the silliest novels that has recently appeared. Second, it must quickly be added that it is also one of the most honest and most moving. Even as we squirm at the careless, cheap writing and the shoddy, second-rate emotional phrasing, the essential truth about these human beings does undeniably get through to us. Intellectually, the book is laughable: a mawkish fog of badly managed words; emotionally it is very nearly a triumph.

John Alden Bennington, aged twenty-one, so nearly a prig as makes no matter, is spending the eve of his wedding alone, in order to admire himself. The girl he might have married calls him up and his composure

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shatters. His marriage, which he has arranged carefully but without conviction, is a foreordained failure. He manages to have his work take him to out-of-the-way places and stays away from home eight years. Shortly after his return, his wife dies, leaving him with three children. The girl he might have married is waiting for him, but she is now middle-aged, gray-haired. Soon our hero falls in love with a younger woman, Ursula, of independent ideas. Eventually they become lovers; but in the meantime he has allowed himself to drift into an understanding with his patient Griselda. The understanding drifts into an engagement and, then, marriage, though by this time he and Ursula are madly in love with one another. When Ursula discovers how he has deceived not only her and the other woman, but also himself, she is nearly broken-hearted. In final desperation he tells his wife everything: but it is too late; Ursula marries another man; his wife retires to be the housekeeper for his children; and he continues his lonely hotel-to-hotel existence, carrying Ursula's old love-letters in his pocket, a quitter to the last.

The book is, superficially, compact of blunders and ineptitudes—mistakes in grammar, in geography, in quotation (of which the author is very fond); you might easily think her ignorant of the first principles of writing. But she has a fundamental possession worth all that: she knows her characters by heart.

T. S. MATTHEWS

PRIMA DONNA *by Pitts Sanborn*
(LONGMANS, GREEN; TWO VOLS.; $5.00)

THOSE who have followed Pitts Sanborn's music criticisms in the New York *Globe* and more recently in the New York *Telegram* have long known that he can write with a sense of the *mot juste* which is almost Gallic, and now in *Prima Donna* he has shown that he is a creative artist as well. *Prima Donna* is an unusual novel, not only because of its two volumes and 175,000 words, or because of its introduction of some thinly disguised figures of the actual operatic world. It is an unusual novel for a number of reasons, some of these reasons by their very paradox make it difficult of just appraisal. Its story is far from new—simply the life, loves, operatic triumphs and failures of an American girl from the Middle West—but there are in it color, dramatic episodes, characterizations, which raise it far above the level of most contemporary American fiction. Indeed, one portion of the book is extraordinary, though it is a portion which only incidentally has anything to do with opera.

In his knowledge of French character and of the codes and freedom and inhibitions of French life, Mr. Sanborn displays an insight and mastery which have been approached by no living American. One would have to go back to the early Henry James, the James of *The American,* for scenes as searching and as poignant in their studies of the relations between the two utterly alien civilizations, the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon, as the scenes dealing with Helma's love affairs with Raymond, Ravet, and Guy. The figures of these three extraordinarily diverse types of Frenchmen are no mere symbols to bring out the author's meaning. Each is a masterpiece of portraiture, each is a living and extraordinarily vital personality. It is these scenes which give *Prima Donna* its real significance, and which make one wish that Mr. Sanborn had omitted both the opening chapters dealing with Helma's life in the Middle West and the final portion dealing with the aging Gonsalvo. The first is dull and the latter fails to ring true. The Gonsalvo who was Helma's first lover is a vital figure and Helma's fascination is explainable, but it is inconceivable that Helma could have so completely forgotten his caddish brutality as to become his good angel. Such things have happened, but not to the type of woman Mr. Sanborn has given us in Helma Seymour.

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Mr. Sanborn is in his French scenes that rarest of rare figures, an American novelist who is at home in the Great World. There is here neither in his attitude nor his style the slightest touch of provincialism, yet he is a cosmopolitan whose feet are none the less firmly planted on the soil of his native America. Whatever his understanding and his sympathies, he is vital because his emotions spring from the earth where he was born. Yet there is in him a strange paradox. To this man of the world, opera itself is as truly a fairyland as it is to any youthful small-town music student who hopes some day to live in New York. Knowing the opera world and its denizens intimately, knowing the operas themselves through and through, Mr. Sanborn still believes in Santa Claus. He writes of opera and opera singers with all the gusto of a romantic boy of twenty. His chief protagonist, Helma, is, in her thoughts and ideals, when they have to do with opera, simply the stock operatic heroine. Moreover Mr. Sanborn's descriptions of how she learns and sings her parts are interminable. They ought to be interesting to music students—for whom they undoubtedly have a value—but in a novel they become an obsession of the author.

In Mr. Sanborn's attitude toward opera there is in its very naïveté something engaging, but it is difficult to believe that the same man wrote the scenes dealing with Guy de Laurac and his mother. It is evident that there are two Pitts Sanborns—the mature man and the Peter Pan. Of the latter, however, American literature shows an abundance, while of mature men it is very chary in its gift. For his next novel let us wish Mr. Sanborn a more vigorous blue pencil for the non-essential scenes and a forgetfulness of the importance of the art of opera. Indeed, let us hope that he will forget opera completely. His talent is too deep and genuine to be wasted on what is practically always a factitious theme.

GRENVILLE VERNON

MAMBA'S DAUGHTERS *by DuBose Heyward* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; $2.50)

THE life of a race close to slavery is the subject of *Mamba's Daughters*. If Mamba does not follow *Porgy* to the stage, it will be a thousand pities. Her determination to give her granddaughter, Lissa, "a chance", her endless sacrifices, her sly use of "my white folk", her almost merciless driving of big, stupid Hagar, Lissa's mother, make a theme perfectly sustained and very moving, even without the rich trappings of Negro humor, Negro superstitions and, again, Negro spirituals. (It is astonishing how the bare words of these songs convey the feeling of music or, perhaps, it is the perfectly created atmosphere that projects them emotionally beyond printed lines.)

The spokes of the story reach out widely, touching this and that phase of the "Negro problem"—the relation of the Negroes to the southern whites, the advent of a new, dangerously imitative culture among the educated blacks, the presence of the flashy, up-to-date, city bred type and so on. Toward the end, the scene shifts from Charleston to Harlem, bringing a brief glimpse of what the "new life" means and another angle of the whole race question. Added to these, there is the story of the Wentworths, an old Charleston family, fighting against poverty to hold their place in the decorous society of the city. These elements give body to the book. They could in no way be called non-essentials. Yet, they are pale and ordinary beside the magnificent chapters devoted to Mamba and Hagar. "She was not a full-blooded African negro, but her prominent nose, and the coppery cast to her dark skin suggested a strain of American Indian rather than an admixture of white blood in her veins. Her face had reached the point at which it tells nothing of age. As it looked now with its multitudinous wrinkles it would still look at her death. She smiled a little timidly and revealed a lonely yellow fang

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in the middle of her lower gum. . . . From the network of wrinkles the woman's eyes, large and of a peculiar live brown brilliance, looked startlingly out, bright with the fire of indomitable youth." Thus Mamba, as she stood in the Wentworths' kitchen, making her first canny effort to annex a white family. For the southern custom decrees that a white family shall protect its retainers and Mamba had a daughter who was "born trouble". Poor Hagar, so vast of bulk, so childishly stupid, so very good-hearted. When the trouble came, she always turned to Mamba for instruction—not exactly for help. Mamba always saved her. But it was for Lissa's sake, Lissa, the olive-skinned child. Yet, in the end, Hagar knew quite well what to do and, doing it, was unforgettably grand. . . . Woven about the three central characters are many scenes, the familiar Catfish Alley of *Porgy,* the Negro church during midnight mass, the men and Hagar at work in the phosphate mines across the river, the miners' camp in "fever season" when all the whites leave the lowlands at sundown and the Negroes drop their fears—scenes packed with rhythm, colors, smells and, again, more rhythm. Altogether, a book that haunts your senses as well as your memory.

MARGARET CHENEY DAWSON

RED HARVEST *by Dashiell Hammett*
(KNOPF; $2.00)

IT IS doubtful if even Ernest Hemingway has ever written more effective dialogue than may be found within the pages of this extraordinary tale of gunmen, gin and gangsters. The author displays a style of amazing clarity and compactness, devoid of literary frills and furbelows, and his characters, who race through the story with the rapidity and destructiveness of machine guns, speak the crisp, hard-boiled language of the underworld. Moreover, they speak it truly, without a single false or jarring note, for Mr. Hammett, himself an old-time Pinkerton detective, knows his crime and criminals through many years of personal contact. Those who begin to weary of the similarity of modern detective novels, with their clumsily involved plots and their artificial situations and conversations, will find their interest revived by this realistic, straightforward story, for it is concerned solely with fast and furious action and it introduces a detective who achieves his purposes without recourse to higher mathematics, necromancy or fanciful reasoning. It reads like the latest news from Chicago.

Mr. Hammett's hero, an operative of a private detective agency, who tells the story, is confronted by a mystery when he arrives in Personville, a western town so wicked that its citizens call it Poisonville, but it is a mystery of no particular consequence and he quickly gets to the bottom of it by simply employing common sense and his powers of observation.

Thereafter, he performs no miracles whatsoever. But in a moment of panic, soon regretted, Personville's big political and business boss hires him to rid the town of its gunmen and gangsters, and he proceeds to do the job by acting as a sort of *agent provocateur* among the criminal cliques, inciting one against the other by superb manoeuvering until in successive bursts of blazing fury they have destroyed themselves. He thus sets the local underworld by the ears and, in one way or another, he is concerned with no fewer than a score of killings. For a considerable period the detective is in doubt whether he may have committed one of the murders himself, for he awakens from a laudanum-and-gin debauch with the handle of an ice pick clutched in his hand and the steel sliver buried in a girl's breast. The chapter in which this excellent crime occurs is one of the high spots of the liveliest detective story that has been published in a decade.

HERBERT ASBURY

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THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA *by Arnold Zweig* (VIKING; $2.50)

ONE hesitates to call a book great in these days of misleading over-emphasis, but *The Case of Sergeant Grischa* is undoubtedly fine literature. The setting is the amorphous eastern front of the great war, but we hear no thunder of guns. There is only the military machine and some members of the High Command, dreaming of a vaster German Empire and actually digging their own graves. Perhaps because they missed the significance of Sergeant Grischa. "When once a man is caught in the machine, he comes out a corpse." Grischa is caught.

He runs away from a prison camp, not because he suffers physical cruelty or dislikes his comrades, but because he cannot stand it any longer. He must go home to his wife and baby in Vologda. "As a stone falls, so his mind was set." There is high adventure in his escape and wanderings in a wood, where he joins a band of deserters and refugees from both sides of the battle-line. The girl, Babka, who loves him, suggests a plan for crossing the frontier, and eventually lands him before a firing squad. He assumes the identity of one Bjuscheff, dead, but, since his demise, adjudged a spy. After conviction he proves his own identity to the satisfaction of one German general and his entourage, but another decides to make an issue of his case and he is executed.

As a portrait of a Russian by an alien, Grischa is not so illuminative as that done by Conrad in *Under Western Eyes*. But, then, Conrad was a Pole and, presumably, a Slav. This is an objective study and, though as such Grischa is great enough, he absorbs Arnold Zweig less as a personality than as a touchstone for the ore in the various characters with which he comes in contact. Through him Zweig impinges on that war mentality which is like the mentality of the Stone Age and strikes from it sparks of higher human emotions. Their conflict in the end leaves Grischa as a watch with the mainspring gone. "And I don't want a new one put in."

There are two German qualities in this book, and they are those which make German artists great. There is a wealth of detail, meticulously true, both as regards the characters and their settings. The detail, however, is always subordinated to the main effect and serves only to enrich and not overload it. And then, there is that peculiar kinship with natural forces, which is felt in Goethe's lyrics, Beethoven's *Pastorale* and the Grimm fairy-tales.

We get Grischa in his wood, frightening a lynx off with laughter, because the lynx looks so like himself. He calls the animal a tree-cat, never having seen it before. We get Grischa in good humor, "light-hearted as a fish heading for a weir", and Grischa lying in his prison bed in despair during a thunderstorm. "The lightning flashes, like the quivering eyelids of a brooding God, flickered across his pallid face." He has no doubt that the God is shooting at him and his very soul says: *"Kamerad!"* or the Russian equivalent.

NORAH MEADE

THE SLOWER JUDAS *by G. B. Stern* (KNOPF; $2.50)

The Slower Judas is a book of short stories which appear to be the odds and ends of a novelist's material: little episodes developed along familiar lines in a mood of straightforward irony. The characters slip from one's mind when the book has been finished; the situation—as it is often said it should be in short stories—is the thing. A man who has spent fourteen years in Africa, making a fortune, returns with the dream of providing a graceful old age for his mother, whom he pictures dressed in lace and knitting by the window. But his mother is a rakish old pirate, who is fond of gin-and-bitters and is promoting a dozen shady business schemes; at the end of one week in the rôle of "dear

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mummy", she revolts . . . A wealthy widow, whose fortune passes to other members of her husband's family if she remarries, becomes engaged, disengaged, re-engaged and re-disengaged to a poor poet; the activities of her sister-in-law and nephews, as the money seems about to drop into their hands and is snatched away again, provide a diverting tale, not too flattering to human nature . . . The obscure son of a celebrated dramatist, and father of a celebrated poet, who has spent his life saying, "No, that is my father", and, more recently, "No, that is my son", passes himself off successfully in a small Italian resort as both his father and his son. For the first time in his life, he is lionized—until a woman who has known his father falls in love with him out of pity . . . The stories are told with professional competence, but without any striking felicities of style or illumination of character; they will provide an interesting evening's reading, but will not add noticeably to Miss Stern's reputation, which rests more solidly on her novels.

LAWRENCE S. MORRIS

THE VILLAGE DOCTOR *by Sheila Kaye-Smith* (DUTTON; $2.50)

MISS SHEILA KAYE-SMITH has gone to live in London. In *The Village Doctor* she looks at her old home, Sussex, through a city haze which has emasculated her people and made their country both blurred and unbeautiful.

Philip Green, the doctor, goes reluctantly to Speldham from the East End for reasons connected vaguely with his financial and physical condition. Suffering from boredom and the sensation of being classed as a "furriner" by his patients, he falls in love—or does he?—and marries one Laura Blazier. Laura, whose father is of good yeoman stock dating back three clear centuries, has had the disadvantage of a Brighton mother and an education that puts her, occasionally, out of her class. She accepts the doctor largely because of his gentility and, after marriage, reverts to type and longs for her old lover, Saul Peascod. Saul has a broad back, whereas the doctor is "a gingery liddle fellow". But Saul's love, which had once been of the variety that "asks to wed", has degenerated into a "gipsy love which sometimes has its own dark beauty, but which more often frightened her, making her despair when she thought of the years before them".

A typhoid epidemic, caused by the fact that the Speldham population would drink the water into which they drained, restores to Laura a workable affection for the husband whose skill and devotion save her from death.

There are no memorable scenes or characters in this book.

If Sheila Kaye-Smith has really come to appreciate the "cheery smells of fish and beer" in the East End, why does she not give us a London equivalent of Joanna Godden? They are numerous in the environs of Sam Isaac's fish and chip shops.

NORAH MEADE

FIRST LOVE *by E. M. Delafield* (HARPERS; $2.50)

IF ONE wants a mild stimulant, pleasantly administered, E. M. Delafield is one of the English novelists who can be counted upon. Her books are always graceful, competent and clever. She is never tedious or saccharine. It is as impossible to imagine her producing a slovenly novel as it is to suppose that she could ever be anything but charmingly second-rate. Like many women novelists, she has a highly developed social sense, a discriminating eye for the subtleties of human relationships, but her work is thin. It lacks body and fire. Even her most engaging characters have an insecure hold on one's emotions and one's memory.

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In *First Love* Mrs. Delafield has experimented with an unorthodox heroine. Ellie Carey is a misfit in a jazz age. At twenty-four, she is still emotionally inexperienced, pathetically romantic, ill-equipped, despite her beauty, to play a part in modern social life. Moreover, she has always been overshadowed by the glamour and hard brilliance of her older cousin, Victoria, who lacks Ellie's spiritual sensitiveness, but has admirable candor and common sense. Among Vic's friends is Simon Lawless, who is as casual and worldly as she, as incapable of intense feeling. A philanderer by temperament, he falls in love with Ellie, who responds in turn with all the innocent ardor of inexperience. Victoria, well aware of Simon's instability, tries to intervene, but her efforts at averting tragedy are futile. Simon soon tires of Ellie, since he is blind to her finer qualities, and wounds her defenseless love intolerably before their engagement is finally broken. Intending no conscious treachery, but with characteristic ruthlessness, Victoria and Simon then decide to marry. The attraction which has long existed between them is stronger than they had supposed, and though they are genuinely disturbed about Ellie, they do not allow a quixotic delicacy to stand in their way.

Mrs. Delafield follows the fluctuating emotions of her characters with great skill and presents ingeniously their various points of view. But her book suffers from the central defect that Ellie is not a very real or moving figure. One pays perfunctory homage to her gentleness, to the strength and purity of her affections, but she is insipid in comparison with Victoria, whose frankness and vivid charm seem more to be desired. Consequently, there is a lack of poignancy in *First Love* which prevents it from rising above the level of a readable and civilized tale.

EDITH H. WALTON

SILVER CIRCUS *by A. E. Coppard*
(KNOPF; $2.50)

A. E. COPPARD's elfish tales have already won him a sort of moonlight fame. In *Silver Circus* he continues to show his delicate mastery as a prose Puck. The good, traditional short story, from O. Henry to Chekhov, takes our emotions seriously, either by a direct attack on them or, indirectly, by irony; but Mr. Coppard's irony is more that of an impudent fairy. He writes of a Viennese street porter who murdered his wife's lover with the same irresponsible gaiety as when he describes the ape and the ass that lived on a mountain on top of the world, where they drew the water of life and the water of death from the same well. Those who like their fiction in the safe, human tradition will feel cheated and, perhaps, baffled in Mr. Coppard's world; but those who can play with their humanity for a few hours will find that the moon also has its delights and, from that perspective, it is our ordinary world, where suffering and death insist on claiming our attention, that seems unsubstantial and fantastic. Mr. Coppard is not so much cruel to his characters as merely heartless. His fancy plays over England and the Continent, dropping on Shulim Jellinek, who marries lovely Rifki and was too crafty to be shrewd; or on a sixty year old Englishman, who is tormented by the memory, one Whitsuntide morning, of the love that he had not dared to accept at twenty. Mr. Coppard is expert in achieving his effects, especially in a witty and, apparently, inconsequential dialogue. The conversation between Father Corkery and a Protestant curate, waiting for Mrs. Moriarty's baby to be born—if a girl, to be baptized by the curate; if a boy, by the priest—is only one of a number of exquisite comic scenes. In short, Mr. Coppard's range is slight, but he is as deft as any Puck.

LAWRENCE S. MORRIS

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BIOGRAPHY

THE EARLY LIFE OF THOMAS HARDY *by Florence Emily Hardy* (MACMILLAN; $5.00)

IF THE chief value of the biography of a literary man is to aid us in interpreting his work through his experience of life, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy* must be pronounced a success. The years covered are almost exactly fifty, from Hardy's birth in 1840 to the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* when Hardy was near the close of his career as novelist. During these years Hardy practised architecture in his home country about Dorchester and in London, made himself a fair Latin and Greek scholar, abandoned architecture for fiction and learned to turn out novels with a certain desultory skill, travelled somewhat and made a few friends and a fair number of acquaintances in the world of letters. Although Hardy's work up to this time included such notable examples of his power as *Far From the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders,* it cannot be said that, if this volume were the whole record, he would be reckoned above second rate. Recognition even of his early work came to him late, though he lived long to enjoy it. Mrs. Hardy points out that his physical maturing was slow. "He himself said humorously in later times that he was a child till he was sixteen, a youth till he was five-and-twenty, and a young man till he was nearly fifty." His fame was likewise of slow growth. There is, therefore, something peculiarly attractive in this account of Hardy's unpretentious acceptance of a literary career, the slow unfolding of a genius of which he was quite unconscious.

Mrs. Hardy conjectures that her husband's lateness of development may have been due to the remoteness and seclusion of his early life, in the little hamlet of Higher Bockhampton. Certainly, his unconsciousness of excellence and, perhaps, the unawareness of it on the part of the literary world were due in a measure to his shy withdrawal from human association. As a child this was noteworthy. "He loved being alone, but often, to his concealed discomfort, some of the other boys would volunteer to accompany him on his homeward journey to Bockhampton. How much this irked him he recalled long years after. He tried also to avoid being touched by his playmates.—This peculiarity never left him, and to the end of his life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm or his shoulder." An occasion persisted among his early memories when, lying in the sun, "reflecting on his experiences of the world as far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up. Other boys were always telling of when they would be men; he did not want at all to be a man or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot and to know no more people than he already knew (about half a dozen)". He had, it is true, his share of boyish loves, and one wonders if he did not feel the burden of his shyness as something of boyish pain. His most vivid experience came to him at the neighboring merry-

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makings when he was in demand as a fiddler. His grandfather and father were musicians and had played in the gallery of Stinsford Church. He played second to his father's first violin and his uncle's 'cello at weddings, christenings and Christmas parties all about the countryside. It was on these occasions that he heard the West Country ballads, supplanted at the coming of the railroad by London music hall songs, and saw the Christmas mumming of which his account in *The Return of the Native* is a classic. Making music for others had perhaps more influence on Hardy's career than is apparent on the surface. It certainly gave him a strategic place of observation, and the episodes in his novels and, especially, his poems which can be traced back to this opportunity are not few.

It was in observation that Hardy's strength lay. That function of the novelist which calls for participation, for action, for adventure was not for him. When advised by Miss Thackeray that "a novelist must necessarily like society", he blenched. Passive watchfulness was his rôle. Church service gave an opportunity to see human relations and afforded quiet for the imagination to interpret them. It is striking that so many of Hardy's poems have their starting point in church. One is not surprised that he thought of taking orders, like his friend, William Barnes, and combining ministry and poetry. His secular observation included a good deal of the macabre. As a boy he took his father's telescope one day to a hill near his home and turned it toward Dorchester in time to see a man hanged in front of the jail. "At the moment of his placing the glass to his eye, the white figure dropped downwards, and the faint note of the town clock struck eight." Later as assistant to Blomfeld, the London architect, he had to superintend the removal of the bodies from the old cemetery of St. Pancras, to make place for the Midland Railroad. These experiences also are recalled by a certain strain in Hardy's fiction.

For the conscious business of collecting material he had little aptitude. He is rather a pathetic figure as he goes to the Dilke trial with a notebook in hand. He said some admirable things about his literary associates: such as this of Matthew Arnold who "had a manner of having made up his mind upon everything years ago"; or this, of Henry James, "who had a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences", or this, of Walter Pater, "whose manner is that of one carrying weighty ideas without spilling them". On the whole, however, one feels that his time in London was not highly profitable in spite of the Savile Club, the Rabelais Club and old Mrs. Barry Cornwall.

In one direction, it may be said that the present volume does not give an entirely satisfactory account of Hardy's life, that is, of his intellectual experience. As Hardy's successive novels appeared, it used to be a question whether his persistent representation of human life as the phenomenon of a blind creative will of which consciousness reveals the tragedy, was a deeply held philosophy or merely an artistic device, a back drop against which his characters were effectively thrown. The publication of his Wessex poems, some of which bore dates of the late eighteen-sixties, showed that Hardy had very early achieved a pessimism akin to Schopenhauer's, but under what circumstances or influences we are left in doubt, except for a reference to his association with Sir Leslie Stephen. Perhaps the next volume, with its account of *Jude the Obscure* and *The Dynasts,* will enlighten us. Hardy was apparently never anti-Christian. He once thought of taking orders; he always had clerical friends; his first wife was deeply religious. Her account of their early love and marriage, written in 1911, the year before her death, closes with a declaration of faith that one is tempted to read as a considered reply to Hardy's own attitude.

I have had various experiences, interesting some, sad others, since that lovely day, but all

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showing that an Unseen Power of great benevolence directs my ways; I have some philosophy, and mysticism, and an ardent belief in Christianity and the life beyond this present one, all which makes any existence curiously interesting. As one watches happenings (and even if should occur unhappy happenings), outward circumstances are of less importance if Christ is our highest ideal. A strange unearthly brilliance shines around our path, penetrating and dispersing difficulties with its warmth and glow.

Excerpts from Hardy's note books, which become more frequent as the volume advances, show his preoccupation with the idea of human automatism. For example:

Mode for a historical Drama. Action mostly automatic; reflex movements, etc. Not the result of what is called motive, though always ostensibly so, even to the actors' own consciousness. Apply an enlargement of these theories to, say, "The Hundred Days"!

Write a history of human automatism or impulsion, *viz.*, an account of human action in spite of human knowledge, showing how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it.

A sense of the value of irony in his art is shown by a "New Year's thought" in 1879:

A perception of the *failure* of *things* to be what they are meant to be, lends them, in place of the intended interest, a new and greater interest of an unintended kind.

Hardy was not, however, primarily a philosopher. His sense of the futility of the conscious, of the power of the unconscious (whether or not the distinction bears the tragic implication he gave to it), corresponds to the realities of his own life and art. In this respect, as in others, he is in dramatic contrast to Meredith. While the latter chose his characters and situations from the walks of life where the stream of consciousness runs most quickly, where intelligence plays most clearly its directing part, Hardy found his greatest success in presenting men and women closest to nature, of primitive reactions and instinctive modes of behavior. From Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to Angel Clare in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* he held up the intellectual as a target for scorn. The present volume describes the Hardy that we should expect from the Wessex novels, a man whose life was in the roots sunk so deeply into the human soil, rather than in the foliage that spread itself so moderately to the upper air. Henry James once called Hardy a stoat. Carlyle would have admired him as an example of the doctrine which he constantly preached, "that the truly strong mind . . . is nowise the mind acquainted with its strength: that here as before the sign of health is unconsciousness".

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

RICHARD BURDON HALDANE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY *by Viscount Haldane* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; $5.00)

LORD HALDANE stands revealed in this fascinating autobiography as one of the most interesting and influential statesmen of the prewar days in Great Britain. That he was not a great leader who could command popular support for the aims and ideals which he followed faithfully throughout his long life he himself attributes to lack of personal magnetism, and it was without doubt this aloofness from the people which made them so ready to doubt his patriotism at the beginning of the war simply because of his deep interest in German thought. This phase of his career is, however, an old story. It has long since been recognized that no charge of disloyalty ever rested upon such a slim foundation and that, as a matter of fact, it was Lord Haldane, more than any other man, who made possible through his reorganization of the British army his country's prompt and effective intervention in France.

What we are more interested in is the story of a life characterized by great enthusiasms, intense energy and capacity for work

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and high idealism. His absorption in philosophy, his brilliant career in the law and his public service as Secretary of State of War, Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence and Lord Chancellor all bear witness to a degree of achievement which comes to few. But this is not the note upon which he ends his autobiography. It is rather the happiness he found in life through "the sense of having worked . . . better that than more honours and more wealth, and more esteem from men".

Philosophy, the law, the army and education were the great passions of his life. Into each of these he threw himself with equal enthusiasm. It was the last which dominated his closing years and it was because Labor, rather than the Liberals, seemed to share his ideals on education that he deserted his former colleagues and joined the Labor Government. With all of Labor's aspirations he was not in entire sympathy, but he believed so whole-heartedly in equality of opportunity, and was so despondent over what he regarded as the decay of Liberalism, that his decision to co-operate with Ramsay MacDonald was inevitable.

From the historical point of view Lord Haldane adds little to what he has already told in *Before the War*. But there is one interesting point which is still obscure. After the famous military conversations between the French and English general staffs in 1906, Lord Haldane visited the German Emperor. The fact that such conversations had been held was known in Berlin and the matter was discussed by the Emperor and his guest. Lord Haldane declared that such preliminary knowledge was regarded as essential for any army that was to be prepared for a possible task, and, he states in his autobiography, the Emperor agreed with him and said he had no quarrel with England over what had been done.

Yet, in January, 1907, Metternich reported to his master, according to German documentary evidence, that Lord Haldane, while not denying that military conversations between French and English officers might have taken place, had told him that he knew nothing of them. It was no wonder that the Kaiser added to his ambassador's report: "Impudence! He, the Minister of a Parliamentary country, not supposed to know that! He lies!"

To leaven the mass of his reminiscences, Lord Haldane displays a delightful sense of humor. One cannot forget the picture of his kicking off his pumps at an official reception, after the King and the Kaiser had left, in order that the German war minister might find relief from his own too-tight shoes by following the Englishman's example. And to make matters perfectly all right Lord Haldane gravely explained to the grateful German that it was the custom of British courtiers to take off their shoes immediately their King had left the room.

Written in a direct and engaging style, Lord Haldane's book deserves a high place among the memoirs and autobiographies of the statesmen concerned with European politics in the pre-war era, not so much because of its contribution to history as because of its value as a frank record of a full, active and highly satisfying life.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

THE TRAGIC EMPRESS: MEMORIES OF THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE *by Maurice Paléologue; translated by Hamish Miles* (HARPERS; $3.50)

IN SPITE of the fact that it is only fifty-seven years since the fall of the Second Empire and that there are still people living who remember its heyday, it seems as remote to us as the age of Louis XIV and somehow far less comprehensible. A curious unreality clings about Napoleon III's ephemeral experiment in imperialism. Bismarck's jibe, "this third Napoleon who is not even a second", expressed a conviction that has en-

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dured, that the Second Empire was no more than a vast melodrama in which the bombastic gestures and utterances of the actors did not conceal the fact that they were ill at ease in their rôles. And even its memory has begun to grow dim, so that the extraordinarily vivid picture which M. Paléologue has given of the Empress Eugénie, in his record of the conversations he had with her over a long period of years, is particularly valuable.

M. Paléologue has written about Eugénie with a deep historical consciousness and a profound realization of her amazing destiny as a human being, and in a singularly urbane and felicitous style. The account he has given us of those confidences he received from Eugénie, which could be accurately described as her *apologia pro vita sua,* is extraordinarily interesting both from the point of view of the fresh light they cast upon the secret history of the Second Empire and, above all, as a revelation of the character of the Empress herself. In those fervid soliloquies (for they can hardly be called anything else—the part played by M. Paléologue was very like that of the *confidant* in the classic drama) in which Eugénie evoked the memory of the vanished glories of the Empire and unburdened her own heart to her unfailingly tactful and sympathetic listener, she drew an incomparable self-portrait which M. Paléologue has presented in the most admirable way. She won M. Paléologue's admiration, though he makes it quite plain that he did not share a great many of her opinions; and it would be impossible to withhold one's admiration for her as a human being. That fortitude of spirit, which enabled her to endure such extraordinary misfortunes with such noble serenity, permeates all her utterances to M. Paléologue, and compels not only respect but even a certain reverence. One can feel it and still disagree as completely as M. Paléologue does with her views on politics, finding her vindication of the Second Empire wholly unconvincing. One can see that her obviously sincere denial of the charge that she influenced Napoleon III unduly is contradicted by her own words a dozen times over. For her statements prove how great and how uniformly disastrous her influence over the Emperor's policy actually was and, quite unconsciously, she has given us a picture of their relationship which is not only extraordinary but convincing. Of her ultimate domination of Napoleon III, there can be no doubt. It could not very well have been otherwise. She was a far less complex character than the Emperor—that strange compound of the adventurer and the idealist—she was indeed in the last analysis a very simple woman, iron-willed, courageous, possessive. She was also intelligent, but in the end all her convictions were those of an emotionalist. Her policy is not hard to define: she was determined that her son should inherit the authority of his father, absolutely undiminished, and, therefore, she bitterly opposed Napoleon's scheme of creating a "liberal empire". His dualism was not calculated to resist her singleness of purpose, and, in her account of the closing scenes of the Empire, we see him, in her shadow, a remote, melancholy, enigmatic figure, eternally rent by the conflict of his incompatible aspirations—a conflict which Eugénie never knew or understood.

One can praise her or blame her for the part she played in history, but as a human being she has a certain grandeur. M. Paléologue's description of his last meeting with her, a month after the Armistice and a year before her death, is profoundly impressive. She informed him calmly that she was at last ready to die. She had witnessed the defeat of Germany, which she regarded as the justification of her husband and the Second Empire and the compensation for all her own sorrows. "My dear friend, Queen Victoria used often to say to me, 'What we do not understand now we shall understand some day—in this life or the next'," she told M. Paléologue. "God has graciously given me

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the explanation while I can still rejoice in it here below."

Though she died only nine years ago, the Empress Eugénie was not of our time, either in her virtues or her defects. Perhaps we should not attempt to judge her, but think of her only as she appears in that final scene, passing to her death with the pride of some dethroned queen of ancient tragedy, secure in the conviction that her destiny had been the preoccupation of the gods.

ESTHER MURPHY

ADEPTS IN SELF-PORTRAITURE: CASANOVA, STENDHAL, TOLSTOY *by Stefan Zweig* (VIKING; $3.00)

THIS volume forms one panel in an ambitious series of portraits under the general title of "Master Builders". As the author admits at the outset, it is something of a surprise to find Casanova, Stendhal and Tolstoy linked together. But the volume convincingly proves that each of them, on a different level, was a master autobiographer. Casanova, at the end of his life, obscure and broken down physically, revived the memories of his prime, when he had passed across Europe like a bull through a field of cows, to persuade himself that he was not yet dead. Stendhal, as interested in the subtleties of the mind and heart as Casanova was indifferent to them, began in his youth an incessant analysis of the motives of every deed and thought and feeling. Tolstoy, with as ardent a physical life as Casanova's and an intellectual curiosity as strong as Stendhal's, lifted the analysis to the third level of attempting to judge the motives he uncovered—or believed he uncovered. It might be said that Casanova saw only himself; Stendhal, himself against the background of men; and Tolstoy, himself among other men, against the background of the unknown. For this reason, the three portraits, as Stefan Zweig has drawn them, rise in scope and intensity. But each of them is a rounded portrait, given solidity by a thorough knowledge of the facts.

LAWRENCE S. MORRIS

THE AMAZING LIFE OF JOHN LAW *by Georges Oudard* (PAYSON & CLARKE; $3.50)

THE adjective, "amazing", applied to the life of John Law as it is told by M. Oudard, is not inappropriate. Born in Scotland of a good family, Law first gained a certain dubious fame as a gambler whose extravagance was notorious, even in an extravagant time. Early exiled from England, he went to live in Holland, where he evolved a system of state control of banking which France, under the Regent, was persuaded to adopt at a time of great financial distress due to the extravagance of Louis XIV. This banking system saved France from bankruptcy.

Law's next exploit was the establishment of the "Company of the West", the "Mississippi Bubble", through which tremendous fortunes were made and lost. After its collapse, Law died in Venice, penniless and outcast, but one of the greatest influences on America's development. This portrait of him is intensely alive.

R. ELLSWORTH LARSSON

PÈRE MARQUETTE *by Agnes Repplier* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; $3.00)

WITH an eye always open to the "singularly picturesque surroundings and accessories" of primitive America, Miss Repplier has conjured up from such authentic sources as *The Jesuit Relations,* as well as romantic legends, a very human likeness of one of its most romantic figures. Through a scene that bristles with poisoned arrows, she has caused Père Marquette to move clearly and with dignity.

R. ELLSWORTH LARSSON

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

FORM AND STYLE IN POETRY *by W. P. Ker* (MACMILLAN; $4.00)

DIALOGUES AND MONOLOGUES *by Humbert Wolfe* (KNOPF; $2.50)

MOVEMENTS IN MODERN ENGLISH POETRY AND PROSE *by Sherard Vines* (OXFORD; $3.00)

THE increase in specialization which has created modern industry is a menace to modern culture. Collectively we are coming to know too much, so that individually we know too little. The man whose job it is to fix one screw in the hood of a Ford does not need any acquaintance with the arrangement of the magneto; but an analogous limitation in esthetic experience must be disastrous. If I meet a man with a passion for Poussin and a contempt for Picasso, I suspect him of being a sentimental archæologist. If I meet a man with a passion for Picasso and a contempt for Poussin, I know him to be a fashionable fool. But the flood of books has become so overwhelming that scholars incline increasingly to neglect the present, and admirers of the moderns to ignore the past. The critical judgments of both parties thus become futile. Richardson and Proust, Donne and Eliot, Farquhar and Shaw, Sterne and Virginia Woolf mutually illuminate one another. If people could oblige themselves to read one old book after every new book, the level of criticism would be immeasurably raised.

Of the three books listed above, Professor Ker's is the most valuable. At first sight it seems dull. The style is neither flowing nor pungent. But reading it, one becomes impressed by the immense erudition of the author, by his sound sense and fine integrity. He could quote apposite instances from the literatures of Greece, Rome, Provence, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, Catalonia and Denmark. Yet his learning seems never to have dimmed his appreciation. Swinburne is the latest author of whom the book has much to say, but one feels that if Professor Ker were alive, his temperate comments on *The Waste Land* or *Orlando* would be far more to the point than almost any of the violently favorable or hostile notices these books have received. In discussing imitations of Greek tragedy, for instance, he points out that Ibsen is a true successor of Racine, "in so far as the Unities are strictly observed, the characters often motionless, and the action often mainly through conversation which, as managed by a master, is the most impressive sort of dramatic action". *Form and Style in Poetry* is technical criticism, which is the best sort. It deals with diction, versification, the use of similes, and the relation between forms of verse and forms of poetry. The sentimentalist who prefers not to know by what means his emotions are aroused should avoid the book. It conducts us onto the backstage of literature and disproves the romantic fallacy that genius can neglect technique.

Professor Ker wrote for the lecture-room, Mr. Humbert Wolfe apparently for the sub-

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way. He is distinguished for his success, almost alone among contemporary Englishmen, in making poetry pay. And his book is largely taken up with a defense of the sort of verse that he writes himself and an attack upon the "Modernists". He uses a rhetorical style, embellished with epigrams in the Oxford manner. Worse than this, he uses the form of dialogue, inventing an advocate for "Modernism" whose arguments, like clay pigeons or driven pheasants, are merely put up that he may bring them down. The book is packed with false logic. "If Cummings is right, then Yeats is wrong," he exclaims, for instance; and neglects the development of Yeats from the early poems of Celtic Twilight to his last, and, I think, finest volume, *The Tower,* in which his verse has a dry stony quality not unlike Mr. Eliot's. He quotes as an ugly end which ruins a beautiful poem

> And let thin liquid siftings fall
> To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud,

lines which appear to me the finest in that particular work. He says that "The Hollow Men" ends in prose, when it really ends in verse as rhythmical as a nursery rhyme.

Rightly he insists that progress in the arts consists of a faithful development of tradition. But he seems unable to distinguish between traditional principles and the superficial variety which keeps them alive. "Every art has progressed vitally since the 'nineties," he writes, "the novel, painting, architecture and verse. . . . There is nothing in E. M. Forster which would have offended Jane Austen, Monet and Manet could be hung by the side of Constable without conflict, the town-hall at Stockholm could have been built next door to the Pitti Palace without incongruity." But the town-hall at Stockholm is not vital modern architecture like that of Le Corbusier; but Mr. Forster is remarkable for his odd fidelity to academic forms; but Manet and Monet have not appeared since the 'nineties (Manet died in 1883) and belonged to a school which deliberately imitated Constable's technique. Gothic and Renaissance churches, the painting of Giotto and Michelangelo, the poems of Keats and Pope may now appear to harmonize. But read what the Seventeenth Century thought of the Italian primitives, and of Gothic architecture, read what Keats said of Pope, (and Gifford of Keats), and the worthlessness of this test of "harmony" becomes obvious. Mr. Wolfe's book cannot be recommended even to those who are seeking excuses for disliking the best contemporary work.

Mr. Sherard Vines—perhaps I should say Professor Vines, as he is a member of the University of Tokio—has written a valuable book. Intended for the Japanese student, it gives a short view of contemporary poetry, fiction and criticism in England. There is little store in it for analytical explanations of the author's opinions, but his taste seems to me extraordinarily good. (I fear that merely means that I almost always agree with him.) He is a defender of the Moderns, but of a very different calibre to the Aunt Sally which Mr. Wolfe sets up in that position. He is a little unfair to Wells and Shaw, but he shows the greatest acuteness in perceiving the emptiness behind Mr. de la Mare's pretty façade, and the rare beauty which occasional silliness conceals from many readers of Ronald Firbank. He devotes more space to Miss Kaye-Smith than her published works appear to warrant; he is hardly fair to Mr. D. H. Lawrence, and I think he underrates the mastery over language possessed by Mr. James Joyce. (But, alas, Mr. Joyce has a morbid fear of his own genius for beauty of phrase.) On the whole, Mr. Vines's book is far the best handbook to the contemporary writers of England which exists. And if anyone could swallow Mr. Humbert Wolfe's arguments, here at hand would be an appetizing as well as effective antidote.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

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PHASES OF ENGLISH POETRY *by Herbert Read* (HARCOURT, BRACE; $1.25)

MR. HERBERT READ is well known in England as a critic of soundness and sobriety. If he is not among the more colorful of contemporary critics of literature, whether psychological or sensational, he is at any rate to be counted on for good sense and moderation; and if one were to pick out a chief fault in him, it would probably be his proneness (a proclivity he shares frequently with his fellow contributors to *The Criterion*) to what might be called an over-intellectualism. There are times when one feels him, through his page, as a shade too self-consciously in the act of knitting his brow in thought. And thinking, *for the sake of thinking*, can all too easily lead one into the sterile pastime of "distinction-making".

Mr. Read's book on poetry, however, offends very little in this regard. In fact, if one has a complaint to make, it is all in the other direction. Apparently these chapters on various phases in the history of English poetry were first delivered as lectures and they have, unfortunately, the almost inevitable fault of the lecture, superficiality. In a book of one hundred and fifty small pages, it is manifestly impossible to cover adequately such all-embracing questions as the influence of Spenser on English poetry, or the place of Pope, or the evolution of poetry from ballad to epic and from epic to the poetry of pure subjective idealism. Mr. Read is under a necessity of being summary, and summary he is. He whisks us from Spenser to Crashaw, from Crashaw to Wordsworth, from Wordsworth to the present moment, with something of the breathless speed of the personally conducted tour.

Nevertheless, he raises some interesting points: points, some of them, about which, if space permitted, one would like to pause for a quarrel. He is very sure, for example, that poetry, if it is to be good poetry, must "render exactly the emotional state" which is the intelligence's "instinctive apprehension of reality". Can one be quite so certain about this? Don't we, in this, approach too closely a dualism of explanation which really falsifies the whole unitary process? For Mr. Read is really suggesting that the writing of poetry is a kind of *translation* of an emotional experience into a suitable language. We have the experience (he says in effect) and *then* set to work to find for it an objective correlative in language. But I venture to suggest that the process is not like this at all: that it is itself a direct emotional experience, which happens to be in terms of language rhythmically arranged, and that it is just as true to say that poetry is a *translation of language into experience* as to say the opposite.

Mr. Read's conclusion, in which he suggests that the only way out of the present dilemma (in which the poet finds himself in a social vacuum) would be, possibly, through the music-halls, is ingenious, but not wholly persuasive. Nor can one entirely agree with him that the poet—even if he *does* nowadays merely write out of his own heart and for his own good alone—is useless. Is it impossible that such a poet should find himself, unwittingly, speaking a universal language? It has happened before.

CONRAD AIKEN

A SURVEY OF MODERNIST POETRY *by Laura Riding and Robert Graves* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; $2.00)

A PAMPHLET AGAINST ANTHOLOGIES *by Laura Riding and Robert Graves* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; $2.00)

TO UNDERSTAND the attitude of Miss Riding and Mr. Graves (they are apparently two brains that cerebrate as one) one must accept the premise from which they work: that modern poetry has evolved into an exceedingly specialized activity from what was once

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a rather broad "humanity". Out of emotional looseness, day-dreams, technical opportunism, sentiment and a spontaneous expression has come "a technical branch of culture of the most limited kind". Poetry, therefore, has become a conscious, critical problem with the poet. Accepting this premise, then, the steps which the two-headed author, Riding-Graves, takes in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* assumes a patent logic that is well salted with wit. We learn (and, for the moment, believe) that the stock formula of the Eighteenth Century made it easy for anybody to write poetry without actually being a poet. We accept (also, for the moment) the statement that the democratic enlargement of the Nineteenth Century made it possible for the writer who appealed to the largest possible audience to assume the rank of the greatest poet.

It naturally follows that this appeal to the largest possible audience meant an establishment of rules made by the reading public and the assumption that the antagonism between the modernist poet today and his audience (and there is indubitably an antagonism) is over the question as to whether the rules should be formulated by the audience or the poet. Clarity is the nub of the matter. To quote: "The quarrel now is between the reading public and the modernist poet over the definition of clearness. Both agree that perfect clearness is the end of poetry, but the reading public insists that no poetry is clear except what it can understand at a glance; the modernist poet insists that the clearness of which the poetic mind is capable demands thought and language of a far greater sensitiveness and complexity than the enlarged reading public will permit it to use. To remain true to his conception of what poetry is, he has therefore to run the risk of seeming obscure or freakish, of having no reading public; even of writing what the reading public refuses to call poetry, in order to be a poet".

A Survey of Modernist Poetry, then, becomes a vindication of the modernist poet in his antagonistic attitude toward the public. It explains his problems and adumbrates the immediate progress of this "technical branch of culture of the most limited kind". The conclusions, though not stated, would seem to be the abolition of the reading public and the eventual development of the perfect poet into a sort of Einstein comprehensible only to a sacred dozen. In *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies,* a deliciously-concocted diatribe against the Couch-Untermeyer-Rittenhouse school of editors, we learn what the poem popular with the general reading public (it is the Anthology Poem!) has done to retard the progress of "the technical branch", etc.

As a whole the argument of Riding-Graves is logical and almost convincing. It is only when we pluck the separate statements apart that a doubt enters the mind of the reader—who, after all, should be abolished. The stock formula of the Eighteenth Century did not make it possible for anybody to write poetry without actually being a poet. There was only one Pope. In the Nineteenth Century we do not think of Tennyson and Browning and Tupper and Alexander Smith as greater poets than Shelley and Arnold and Hardy. The eternal antagonism between the poet and his audience has always existed. There is an illogical element in poetry that makes the Riding-Graves meticulous plucking apart of the "Lake Isle of Inisfree" nothing more than amusing silliness. Perhaps the chief flaw in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* is too much pragmatic logic. Any really great poet may come along and upset the Riding-Graves beautifully arranged applecart. Yet, many of those perfectly rounded apples make delicious eating. The two books, as a whole, are stimulating additions to poetic theory and controversy and *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* should be placed in the hands of every anthologist.

HERBERT GORMAN

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A VARIED SHELF

ARMENIA AND THE NEAR EAST *by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* (DUFFIELD; $3.00)

DR. NANSEN has a dangerous gift for his readers—a conscience. While he has studied the Armenian problem on behalf of the League of Nations and, in collaboration with the Soviet authorities, has worked out a scheme for giving the Armenian refugees a home in an irrigated desert in Russian Armenia and while his book is in the nature of a report to world public opinion on this enterprise, its motivation is of greater importance than its recommendations.

The author cannot forgive and will not allow Europe to forget its responsibility for the massacres which all but obliterated the Armenian race. The instruments of these mass-murders were the Turks—under Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks—but the cause was the awakening of Armenian hopes by the sentimental enthusiasts of Western Europe, despite the reluctance, if not the inability, of the European nations to translate these hopes into realities. Massacre—outraged public opinion—paper promises—massacre: such has been the history of Armenia until now only an obscure corner of the Soviet Union remains as their home. "Such is Europe!" Nansen exclaims. "According to the Greek myth she allowed herself to be seduced by a bull. The thought that one is a European is not always a proud one."

He reads the whole ghastly story into the record—"20 piastres was paid for a girl who had not been violated, 5 piastres for one who had been violated or for a widow, and children went for practically nothing", until of the 1,845,450 Armenians in pre-war Turkey only 845,000 survived in 1919. "No European or American Government or statesman troubles now about what has happened; to them the everlasting Armenian problem seems finally and definitely obliterated in Blood." Dr. Nansen rebels against this verdict. The only effort made by Europe to solve the problem since the war was to try to put the entire responsibility upon American shoulders, through the offer of an Armenian mandate which bore startling resemblance to an old-fashioned "buffer state" between British and Russian spheres of activity. When America declined this Grecian gift, Europe had no alternative but to strive to forget the race which it had encouraged to hope for freedom—as a move in the pretty game of international diplomacy—without intending to protect it from the inevitable consequences of what was a juridic act of treason to the Turkish State. It is doubtful, after reading Dr. Nansen's book, that Europe will entirely succeed in so doing.

JOHN CARTER

THE LETTERS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI *edited by Marion Denman Frankfurter and Gardner Jackson* (VIKING; $3.00)

IT WAS wise of the Defense Committee to collect the letters written by Sacco and Vanzetti during their seven-year ordeal and to publish

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them without special pleading and with a minimum of comment. One regrets that the book cannot be made compulsory reading for those who had a hand in the execution and, particularly, for the members of the Lowell Committee. It would be difficult for anyone to read the letters without coming to believe that these were two simple, honest and kindly men, incapable either of murder or of hypocrisy. "I have cut down trees," writes Vanzetti, "with a sense of sympathy for them, and almost a sort of remorse." And this is typical of the tenderness and compassion that suffuses the letters of these convicted "murderers".

Of the two, Vanzetti was by far the more articulate, and most of the letters are his. Sacco was a simple, emotional type, who pined for his family, brooded over his wrongs and was incapable of alleviating his loneliness by the resources of his mind. Memories of sunlight and of flowers stirred him as ideas stirred his companion, and he refers to them again and again, as in this poignant passage from the farewell letter to his son:

Don't cry Dante, because many tears have been wasted . . . Instead of crying, be strong, so as to be able to comfort your mother, and when you want to distract your mother from the discouraging soulness, I will tell you what I used to do. To take her for a long walk in the quiet country, gathering wild flowers here and there, resting under the shade of trees . . . But remember always, Dante, in the play of happiness, don't you use all for yourself only, but down yourself just one step at your side and help the weak ones that cry for help, because . . . they are the comrades that fight and fall as your father and Bartolo fought and fell yesterday for the conquest of the joy of freedom for all and the poor workers.

Vanzetti is the opposite type: flexible, eager, the student and thinker, modestly proud of his intellect and rejoicing in its use. His candor and integrity illumine every letter.

The price to perfection is high, sorrowful. I suffered more in making my conscience, than in facing my trial.

Human nature is good. I would assert it even I burned a hundred times, or chained for hundred lives.

Few years ago, when I fancy this world as a college of rascality, I used to look upon such players [of golf and tennis] with the most stern and terrible of glances. But now [that I] experience the devine candor of their world, well now, I look upon them in a different position. Do you know that I never lose the joy of that vagabond freedom of working and living in the open. There was a guitar too, and many pipes, and when I was tired of disperated effort to sing as a tenor, I used to indulge in those minor echos which, in case of waltzes run as follows,—um pa pa—um pa pa, and so on. Well, fulishness apart, that was life, and then I learned something that cannot be learned in the school.

By little of school and very much experiences (well and rightly understood) I became a cosmopolite perambulating phylosopher of the main road,—crushing, burning a world within me and creating a new—better one. Meanwhile, I am having the worst of the worst one.

Naïve as Sacco and Vanzetti may have been in their political philosophy, they were magnificent realists in their attitude toward their own case. "They must kill us," wrote Vanzetti, "to save the dignity and honor of their commonwealth." From the beginning they refused to share the illusions of those optimistic and tender-hearted defenders who successively transferred their hopes to the Supreme Court, to Governor Fuller, to the Lowell Committee and to public opinion. Except for a momentary wavering induced in Vanzetti by the warmth of Governor Fuller's handclasp, they anticipated neither mercy nor justice, and the bitterness of death must have been offset by the knowledge that their anticipations had been justified.

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"In our coffin will lay our friends' optimism and our pessimism," wrote Vanzetti on the day of his execution. "What I wish more than all in this last hour of agony is that our case and our fate may be understood in their real being and serve as a tremendous lesson to the forces of freedom—so that our suffering and death will not have been in vain."

Certainly there could be no better contribution to an understanding of the case than the publication of this volume. It is a pity that the only ones likely to read it are those already convinced of the men's innocence.

R. N. LINSCOTT

ANANIAS, OR THE BAD ARTIST *by Walter Pach* (HARPERS; $4.00)

WHEN, among a thousand volumes of art criticism by our professional critics, there appears one word by someone who knows what he is talking about, it is an event. Walter Pach has written a book; and if, to write that book, he has expanded one sweet breathful of good old-fashioned invective into three hundred and forty-five pages of professorial drivel it may be, if not liked, forgiven. Walter Pach is a painter; not, as critic, one of the number who tried art for a few minutes and then quit (to tell us all about it) but a hard-working, ceaseless student. What any artist tells us about art is Truth—a portion of it. Walter Pach, a painter, speaks, we may assume, with authority.

We'll probably have critics among us as long as human society holds together; and it is with no sense of reforming the inevitable that we would suggest an inquiry into the nature of such social phenomena and submit the critic to be subject for pathological study. That, in a society of living beings whose first and normal impulse—beyond to live and love—is to work, there should exist a class persistently and exclusively devoted to commenting on what others do, is in itself so curious as to suggest, we carefully state, an inherent abnormality probably not unrelated to sexual sterility and impotence. And if we turn to the writings of critics for contributory evidence of such a conclusion, we may find, for example, in the fatuous worship of one for the most vapid sentimentalities and in the resentful snarlings of another against every robust form of art, convincing proof of maladjustment or mental disease.

Unreasoned, for the most part, but not the more unreasonable is the general contempt in which critics are held by all who do creative work, and the entire and unvarying disregard of the creative mind for the counsels of its self-elected mentors should be illuminating to an eager and appreciative public, restive, we may believe, under the hardly intelligible verbiage of presumptuous critical dogma.

Whatever incompetence, ignorance and general mean-mindedness may be charged to the literary critic, he writes, at least, in criticism of the craft he follows. That the critical appraisal of literature calls, to begin with, for just such special familiarity with the practice of it, few people and no critic will deny; and yet that premise, knowledge through experience, is, so it happens, lacking to the writer on art. The presumptuous notion entertained by certain men that they can tell others how to do what they can't do themselves would be ludicrous if it hadn't, by sheer weight of verbal poundage, been forced into tacit acceptance. That acceptance of it makes the critic, in addition to being a pathological nuisance, a real menace to the natural development of the public's intelligence and to the normal flowering of its sensibilities.

Art asks no explanation; it requires no denunciation, no defense. It is invariably the complete and inevitable expression of the artist's vision, the only possible expression of those values which its creator has perceived. Beauty in art is compounded of the absolute in physical law and the relative in the entirety of living experience. The first is of

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infinite permutation and may not be lightly comprehended in a formula; the second is so personal as to be incommensurate with any nature but the artist's own. Criticism, if we consider it, must be premised upon such appreciation of the phenomena of form and color as only the visual-minded can possess; upon such intellectual co-ordination of visual impressions as only the scientist can achieve; upon such participation in what is called human experience as only the most emotionally sensitive beings can know; and upon such co-ordinated understanding of them all, in their relation to human life, as we may look for only in the true philosopher.

Walter Pach is an artist and he possesses, in that visual faculty which in childhood made him want to draw and paint and which his long subsequent experience has sharpened and deepened, one essential qualification for art criticism that not one writer-critic in the world can share with him. However narrow, biased and conventional his judgment upon what is art may be—and it is all of these—it rests, as he naïvely tells us, on his feeling for what's beautiful. He lists what he approves; that is sound evidence.

Beyond that, through near four hundred pages, there is nothing but such a ponderous accumulation of unintelligent bigotry, dull anecdote and sterile pedantry, compounded of a style that in self-conscious banality is at once a contradiction of his own dogmas of art and a boring display of an appalling unhumanity, that we must call this book, of that scant few on art that we have ever read, the worst.

What moral priggery to call Meissonier and his kind "false artists"! They are exactly what they tried to be, good photographic painters and, as such, they have their place. Not only is the author's Ananias presumption false—except as it concerns a few obviously prostituted talents—and boring, as all sermons in this day have come to be, but also the discrediting, to the tune of a whole book, of the work of individual artists is a business in itself of questionable morality, not convincingly unlike National Academician Aitken's evidence before the Customs Board against Brancusi's art, a dirty trick which Walter Pach himself most properly condemns. It is not what men do in art, but how, being artists, they as men conduct themselves. There's room in the world for every kind of art but no room in a decently ordered society for the artist who plays politics.

There is, in this book of criticism, too little of even an attempt at establishing critical bases; and yet we cannot, in passing, neglect that stock fallacy of the so-called modernistic mind which Walter Pach approves: that machines are works of art. They are not. They are works of nature evolved by processes identical in kind with those which everywhere prevail. And as to Walter Pach's basic tenet—that one just knows what is beautiful—it is the same as the critical credo of Royal Cortissoz, so recently most eloquently breathed. And when, by that method, the "Dean of Critics" finds the work of Dewing, Sargent, Frieseke *et al.* to be beautiful and Walter Pach does not, it seems irrelevant. "Mr. Pach, shake hands with Mr. Cortissoz!"

For those of us who know the tale, "That's giving it to 'im, fat lady!"

ROCKWELL KENT

CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND *by Michael Williams*
(DIAL PRESS; $3.50)

THE Editor of *The Commonweal,* Michael Williams, writes, as he tells us frankly, as a journalist and a propagandist. In the course of his chapter on Dayton, Tennessee, he says: "To visit Dayton is—for a Catholic—to realize how isolated and remote is the historic tradition and the reasoned theology, the age-tested philosophy and scholarship of the Catholic Church, in American life today. Oh, for a Newman in the United States". The remark is revealing in two respects: the

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author, whose charm is his directness and sincerity, realizes the sense of hostility to Roman Catholicism, the recent repercussions of which have been so many. He also venerates Newman. He would fain speak to America as Newman did to England, a message of persuasive apologia and ardently flaming conviction as to the divine character of Roman Catholicism. There isn't a trace of superciliousness in the book, or of bigotry, narrowness, pettiness or spite. It isn't the indignant *Et tu, Brute* of the accused, sensitive to the pressure of overwhelmingly hostile glances. Mr. Williams writes—rather speaks—good journalese and pungent American. He conveys by his very attitude one very significant argument which he never advances in overt words: to those who think Roman Catholics in some sense outsiders to the tradition of America (whatever that may be!) he gaily assumes that he *belongs* and speaks from inside. To many a reader this may be the most powerful apologetic in the book, the more compelling because never expressed. It is never expressed because it has probably never occurred to the author that he should think of himself as "different" or "outside". And he is right.

Here then is one answer to a question which is so often asked by many non-Roman Catholics in America, phrased in part by Mr. Marshall, utilized as a dogma by answer in the negative, by the Klan: Can a good Roman Catholic be a good American?

The book is a *livre de circonstance*. It is a string of essays, fugitive bits—on *The Atlantic's* letters and articles to and by ex-Governor Smith, on current questions (*e.g.* "Should a Catholic be President?"), on miscellaneous topics and persons—and yet the unity is organic nevertheless. A background piece of the whole—or (abruptly altering the figure) the string that makes the beads a chain—is the Trappist Abbey at Gethsemane, Kentucky, where most of the composition was done. It is well conceived. The arresting paradox of the contemplative life in super-active America is a healthy and wholesome reminder to those whose knowledge of Roman Catholicism is superficial. Back of the organizational activity of that massive church stands the life of consecration, devotion, prayer. The book is thoroughly good-humored. If it sometimes seems to overvalue Roman Catholic essayists, writers, and workers in sundry fields, it may help redress the balance due to ignoring, ignorance and under-valuation. Where the book seeks to be most persuasive it seems to me least effective: the numbers of Roman Catholics at present in the United States of America, their history in the Republic, the contributions of individuals, the rebuttal of the anonymous priest who wrote in *The Atlantic*—at these points Mr. Williams does not seem to be so felicitous. But the robustious good humor, the effective simplicity of his own sincere devotion, love, and loyalty, his zealous energy to bring others to see what he sees as the enemies both of America and of his church, and in working to combat them to find new horizons—all this is excellent.

But as one finishes the book it seems as if innumerable questions were left unanswered. Probably I was wrong in thinking that it should have dealt with them. Possibly the title misled me. There's no particular attempt to deal with the "Modern Mind" in this group of essays. Such chapter headings as "Dayton, Tennessee", R. I. P. (a touching and simple memorial to William Jennings Bryan), "Professor Cock-Eye", "A Prayer for Mr. Mencken", etc., hardly suggest their relation to the dignified title of the book. It may, of course, be true that counter-propaganda must be "popular" in this sense. It may, however, be wise to dig somewhat deeper into the difficulties which all people of good-will feel to be latent in the situation. There are strain and tension on both sides—among non-Roman Catholics in their attitude to their brother-Americans of that faith, as well as among the latter in

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their present situation. Why not get at the real points where these strains are exerted?

FRANK S. B. GAVIN

THE RISE OF THE HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD *by Count Egon Cæsar Corti* (COSMOPOLITAN; $5.00)

THE REIGN OF THE HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD *by Count Egon Cæsar Corti* (COSMOPOLITAN; $5.00)

WITH the publication of *The Reign of the House of Rothschild,* this unique history by Count Corti of the greatest of financial dynasties is presumably brought to a close. The *Reign* tells the story of the vicissitudes of the great house in the chief capitals of Europe from 1830 to 1870, the period of its greatest power, while an epilogue of some thirty odd pages, "The Rothschilds in the Twentieth Century", indicates more briefly a less spectacular but still extraordinary career.

No institution guards its secret archives more jealously than a great financial house, which explains perhaps the small space occupied by the House of Rothschild in the familiar histories of Europe. But, although not given access to the archives of the House, the Count, by collecting all manner of informal documents and by ransacking the chancellories of Europe, has made us aware of the immensity of this historical omission. It is not too much to say that the Rothschild family for a century has been the most powerful dynasty in Europe. Single monarchs have controlled greater resources but, for consistent exercise of power in high places throughout all of Europe, the House of Rothschild can match them all.

It is a fascinating exercise, to analyze from this mass of incidents simply and brilliantly told the peculiar principles practised by this family of Frankfort Jews, which not only enabled them to become the richest family in Europe but to win the highest respectability, dignity and social honor in every country in which they settled. Their first rule was unquestionably alliance with the highest political personage in the state. From the moment when old Amschel Rothschild showed his collection of rare coins to the Landgrave of Hesse, thus beginning a lifelong relation with the greatest person in Hesse-Cassel, to Alfred's cultivation of friendship with King Edward VII, the tradition was followed. The second principle instilled by Amschel into his five sons was family solidarity. Other dynasties were national and political, but on both these points the Rothschilds were superior; they were international and commercial. By the shrewdest and most foresighted opportunism, so to speak, the House kept in with the parties in power and, yet, by having a leg in all camps, was able to make money, generally speaking, whatever happened. One of the most amazing chapters in the present volume relates the desperate efforts of Solomon, a Legitimist and a follower of Metternich, to explain to his Prince why Nathan, the English Rothschild and a Liberal, had been lending money to the liberal government of Spain. In the end Solomon kept the friendship of Metternich and Nathan kept the silver mines Spain had given him as a concession for the loan.

On the whole, the House used its great influence for peace but when, in spite of them, war came, the Rothschilds equipped the armies of their masters.

CHARLES R. WALKER

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

Compiled by Frank Parker Stockbridge, Life Member of the American Library Association, in Co-operation with the Public Libraries of America

A recipe for literary success: write a readable book about any great character of the past. For a sure-fire hit, select a name with which every literate person and most illiterates are sure to be familiar. Napoleon has been the best bet in this class for a century. George Washington is an always fresh subject for biographers. Lincoln—how many new Lincoln biographies have appeared in the ten years which mark the life, so far, of this Monthly Score? At least, a half dozen, and every one of them "made" the Score. Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria* was near the top of the Score for a year and more. Now comes his *Elizabeth and Essex* to whet the curiosity of those to whom the name of the Virgin Queen has been a familiar one since infancy. Doctor your tale as fiction, tell it as a straightforward "life", treat your subject in any fashion which pleases you so long as you give it human attributes and you have a book which a generation, avid of knowledge, will absorb as fast as the presses can turn it out. Even the movies do it; witness Emil Jannings's triumph as the mad Tsar, Paul I. The realism which today's readers most ardently desire is the realism of real persons, books which will help lift them out of their inferiority complexes by revealing the great as merely human. —F. P. S.

FICTION

1. OLD PYBUS	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
2. SWAN SONG	*John Galsworthy*	SCRIBNER'S
3. SILVER SLIPPERS	*Temple Bailey*	PENN
4. HARNESS	*A. Hamilton Gibbs*	LITTLE, BROWN
5. ALL KNEELING	*Anne Parrish*	HARPERS
6. THE CHILDREN	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
7. THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY	*Thornton Wilder*	BONI
8. THE STRANGE CASE OF MISS ANNIE SPRAGG	*Louis Bromfield*	STOKES
9. POINT COUNTER POINT *	*Aldous Huxley*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
10. THE GREENE MURDER CASE	*S. S. Van Dine*	SCRIBNER'S
11. THE ISLAND WITHIN	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	HARPERS
12. SILAS BRADFORD'S BOY	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON

GENERAL

1. STRANGE INTERLUDE	*Eugene O'Neill*	LIVERIGHT
2. MOTHER INDIA	*Katherine Mayo*	HARCOURT, BRACE
3. ELIZABETH AND ESSEX *	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT, BRACE
4. JOHN BROWN'S BODY	*Stephen Vincent Benét*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
5. GOETHE	*Emil Ludwig*	PUTNAM
6. LINCOLN	*Albert J. Beveridge*	BOBBS-MERRILL
7. NAPOLEON	*Emil Ludwig*	LIVERIGHT
8. WHITHER MANKIND? *	*Charles A. Beard*	LONGMANS, GREEN
9. TRADER HORN	*Alfred Aloysius Horn and Ethelreda Lewis*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
10. THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM	*George Bernard Shaw*	BRENTANO'S
11. THE ROYAL ROAD TO ROMANCE	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
12. MY LIFE	*Isadora Duncan*	LIVERIGHT

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.*

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IN THE BOOKMAN OFFICE

The new typographic dress in which The Bookman appears this month is the work of Robert S. Josephy of New York.

The article on O. E. Rölvaag announced for this issue has been delayed by the illness of the author, Lincoln Colcord.

The Pinchot Studios should have been given credit for the photograph of Elinor Wylie used as a frontispiece in the February issue.

Correspondence

To the Editor of The Bookman,
Dear Sir:

Mr. Allen Tate's paper, "American Poetry Since 1920", which appeared in your January number, hardly deserved such a sweeping and misleading title; it should rather have been captioned, "The Fugitives and Some Others". But, since it was not and since it was presented as a survey of our poetry of the last eight years, perhaps I am justified in taking exception to certain of Mr. Tate's statements on behalf of those who must struggle along on the north side of the Mason-Dixon line.

I shall be brief. In the first place, I object to Mr. Tate's applying the catchword, "decadent," to George Edward Woodberry. Whatever his work may be, it is not that. People do not read Woodberry at the moment; that is all—just as they do not read Arnold or Howells—but none of these is decadent.

A little further on, Mr. Tate declares "the present generation can offer to the public six or seven poets who in the art of writing are superior to the best (Mr. Robinson being excepted) of the preceding generation". He names six poets for illustration, John Crowe Ransom, Léonie Adams, Archibald MacLeish, Mark Van Doren, Hart Crane and Yvor Winters. And I, of the present generation, refuse to credit my eyes but, still, there it is in black and white.

Now, for much of the work of these writers I have only sincere interest; but in this matter of the *art* of writing consider, if you please, certain work of Aiken, Lowell, Millay, Untermeyer, Wylie, Ficke, Leonard, William Rose Benét, Eliot and Pound. I leave it for you, sir, and Bookman readers to determine whether Mr. Tate is a bit extravagant in his enthusiasm.

Apart from his interesting comment on the southern group of poets known as "The Fugitives", and a few others, Mr. Tate's eight-year survey strikes me as being decidedly narrow. He utterly neglects to mention young poets such as George Dillon, Joseph Auslander, Joseph Moncure March, James Whaler, Virginia Moore, Helene Mullins, Thomas Hornsby Ferrill and even Stephen Vincent Benét whose outstanding success, *John Brown's Body,* merits a casual reference, at least, in an essay of this kind, whatever Mr. Tate may think of it personally.

Most sincerely,

Oliver Jenkins

The English Novel

Summary:

The first part of Ford Madox Ford's historical and theoretical survey of the English Novel appeared in the Christmas Bookman. In it Mr. Ford discussed the function of the novel

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in the modern world. He finds that improvements in locomotion and the widespread urbanization of society have made the novel indispensable to the understanding of life, because "it is the only source to which you can turn in order to learn how your fellows spend their entire lives". Today, as a result, both the novelist and the public take his functions very much more seriously than formerly. Mr. Ford suggests, in fact, that novels—and the closely related form of "novelized biography"—have taken over "the department of life that was formerly attended upon by classical culture".

In concluding his introduction Mr. Ford warned readers that while he would write "with almost ferocious seriousness", they were to consider his remarks as suggestions rather than as dictates; and were to remember that however strongly they objected to his opinions by the way, they would at the end have in their minds "a sort of rudimentary map of the Kingdom of the Art of Letters".

In Part Two Mr. Ford picked up the novel at the time of the medieval compilations of short-stories like the *Decameron* and brought it down to Defoe, who "may be called the first writer to strive after some sort of satisfactory convention for the novel".

In Part Three we learned that Mr. Ford does not entirely admire the kind of novel that Defoe founded, "the novel of escape", carried on by Smollett and Marryat, in our day by Wells and Kipling. Nor does he admire another of the three main divisions into which he divides fiction, that of the "nuvvle", whose authors are preoccupied with appearing gentlemen: Fielding, and afterward Thackeray and Meredith. Numerous other individual writers seem to Mr. Ford to have great ability, or genius—Dickens, Beckford, Addison-Steele, Reade, Cooper—but in the kind of novel he prefers, the novel of conscious art written for mature and sensitive readers, he can find no supreme practitioners after Richardson. Memorable work was done in the tradition by women, but the main stream had gone to the continent. This chapter, incidentally, was significantly called "Towards Flaubert".

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS—(*continued*)

The campaign of the poor officer's daughter against poverty and discouragement was Titanic but more so was her generous gaiety and lack of rancor. No one is blamed, not even fate. The royalties and the great artists who pass through the narrative are illuminated with a homely glow, as from a hearth fire. The language seems to retain the chuckle and the robust quality of a German accent, while remaining direct and easy English.

SAILS AND SWORDS *by Arthur Strawn* (BRENTANO'S; $3.50)

THIS volume is the first English biography of Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific. For most of us whose knowledge of the Spanish adventurer's career begins and ends with the moment when he first gazed on the rolling blue of the "South Sea", this biography is an entirely new picture of an indomitable spirit in a cruel age. From the time when Balboa, the bankrupt planter, scrambled out of a cask on the deck of a ship sent to explore the Spanish Main, to the instant when the headsman's axe fell, Strawn has pictured Balboa's adventurous and generally bloodthirsty career. A poignant moment in the biography is Balboa's arrest, just before his execution, by his former companion, Pizarro—the very man who was to carry out Balboa's fatal dream of golden conquest on the Spanish Main.

Essays and Criticism

LIONS AND LAMBS *Caricatures by Low, Interpretations by "Lynx"* (HARCOURT, BRACE; $3.75)

Low is the most brilliant of English political cartoonists. He is not a great caricaturist, because his wit lies in his ideas, not in the quality of his line. Yet each of the thirty-six drawings in this book adds something to our knowledge of the politician or writer or painter depicted. The comments by "Lynx" are caustic and witty. This, for instance, of Lady Oxford: "One could imagine her giving Pavlova a few hints on

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dancing because she had been such a success as a skirt-dancer at bazaars in her youth". Who is "Lynx"? Almost certainly a woman, one guesses, and not improbably a woman-novelist who has had a great success in American journalism. *Lions and Lambs* can be confidently recommended to everyone who takes an interest in English personalities as various as the pompous Austen Chamberlain, the prodigal Augustus John, the provincial St. John Ervine, and the wholesome Prince of Wales.

ARTICLES DE PARIS *by Sisley Huddleston* (MACMILLAN; $2.00)

MR. SISLEY HUDDLESTON has been the Paris correspondent of various English papers, including *The Times* and *The New Statesman*. He is well informed about politics, but in *Articles de Paris* he writes of books and writers and the quotidian incidents of life in France. Reprinted from various publications, these essays have neither the substance nor the polish to form a satisfactory book. There is in them an oleaginous quality which will distress some readers. But to the less fastidious the book will recall idyllic memories of quiet *cafés* in the Latin Quarter, of streams with women washing linen on the outskirts of provincial towns, of vineyards and Bohemians and books.

THE VITAL INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH LITERATURE *by John S. Harrison* (*Published by the author in Indianapolis*; $3.00)

PROFESSOR HARRISON has chosen, as the working principle for his book, the conviction that college students are "so interested in life that they will gladly listen when an instructor shows them that life is the very thing the great Masters have always been interested in". As a result, he has written a book that has fine scholarship, without pedantry, and with an air of sharing experiences common to the author and the reader. It does not insist that one agree with its judgments, which makes for warmth of contact and readier agreement, in the end.

SIXTEEN AUTHORS TO ONE *by David Karsner* (COPELAND; $2.50)

IN THIS series the writer gives sketches of present day American authors on their native heath. He ranges from Theodore Dreiser to James Branch Cabell, from Booth Tarkington to Sherwood Anderson and Will Rogers. After a brief outline of their lives, he turns to their motives for writing, their ideas on life and letters and discloses a number of "literary secrets" with regard to their work and their manner of going about it. The book is the result of personal interviews and, in many cases, friendships of long standing with the writers in question.

PEEPS AT PARNASSUS *by Olga Katzin* (COWARD-MCCANN; $2.00)

MISS KATZIN surveys English verse from the Druids to the Sitwells in some three thousand lines, a third of which are devoted to contemporary writers. She uses throughout the rhymed couplet, though she varies it to fit her subjects. She is very clever, but very careless. And of all forms satire depends most upon extreme precision.

Philosophy and Psychology

TESTING INTELLIGENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT *by Albert J. Levine and Louis Marks* (MACMILLAN; $2.00)

HERE is a rather technical discussion on the part of two officials of the New York City Board of Education, which should be of interest to all who use intelligence tests. The authors present a practical technique for the administering of specific tests, together with a description and critical evaluation of various forms and types of tests. These include individual and group tests, language and performance tests, intelligence and achievement tests, scales for rating progress in the various branches and subjects of school work, tests for the measuring of social or personality traits. A feature of

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the book is the frankly critical treatment accorded the general testing movement by the authors; they do not hesitate to point out its weaknesses and their origins. The conciseness of the book, its soundness and simplicity of language should place it on the desks of most teachers.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE AMERICAN MIND *by Walter B. Pitkin* (SIMON & SCHUSTER; $3.00)

IF YOU are willing to concede the two basic contentions on which Mr. Pitkin's argument rests, you may be disturbed by his conclusions about the fate of America's Best Minds. The first contention is this: modern industry, commerce and professions are built on the rule that more and more work should be done by machines and that no man should be permitted to do work which some one of lesser ability can do acceptably. The second, a psychological postulate, holds that a man who can find no outlet for his native capacities becomes a social problem, if not a psychopathic case. Mr. Pitkin reasons that, as more of the world's work is mechanized, there will be need for fewer Best Minds (who are defined as the uppermost one percent of the total population determined by an Intelligence Quotient of more than 130). He examines industry, commerce, finance, the professions and the arts, to determine the number of jobs which Best Minds may be called upon to fill. And he concludes that by 1975 there will be more than one million and less than half a million jobs for them. He prophesies that America's supermen will become supermendicants. Will they do research? Will they become philosophizing logic-choppers? Even Mr. Pitkin does not know. The last sentence in his book is a question.

NATURAL CONDUCT *by Edwin Bingham Copeland* (STANFORD UNIVERSITY; $3.50)

Two thoughts perplex the author of this volume. One is that science has not contributed

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as much as it should to the happiness of man. Another is that public education is doing nothing to promote the happiness of future men by training them, now, to do that which is right and good. Dean Copeland bases his proposed science of ethics on the biological tenet that the right and the good act is the act which makes for the survival and improvement of the human race. By selective breeding of men, by mass education for sound living and by ethical training of the young, society would be able, says the author, to attain an unprecedented level of efficiency and happiness. In the elaboration of his theme, he enters into realms usually claimed by psychology, sociology and anthropology. He discusses feelings and emotion, for example, and social evolution. He examines the family and the state as institutions involved in the socializing of the young; he scrutinizes the school as an agency for the control of conduct. Like the plot in musical comedies, the thoughts with which the author begins his book are lost now and then in his discussion. The reader is not likely to mind that too much. The content of the book is exceptionally well organized and presented; the typography makes it easy to read.

OUR SLUMBERING WORLD *by Edmund Noble* (HOLT; $3.00)

IN THIS volume the author of *Purposive Evolution* once more ponders the problem of man's life in an integrated world. He scores man's tendency to regard his fellow, himself or any object as something unrelated to the rest of the world. He urges that man apply his thinking powers to the study of relationships—of the "here" and "now" to the past; of man to society; of object to nature. Mr. Noble applies his own mind, in the pages of this book, to the levelling down of the individual by the process of socialization; to the standardization of personalities resulting from a machine age; to the relationship between poverty and wealth. He leads up to a consideration of the effect upon world conflict and arbitration of man's thinking out the true relationship of himself and his nation to the world at large. Throughout his work, the author quotes copiously from a few leading economists and sociologists such as Blackmar and Gillen, Park and Burgess, Fetter, Taussig and C. E. Hayes. The chapter on "The Weakness of Normalcy" is stimulating; otherwise, Mr. Noble says little that is new. But his style is pleasing, and lucid enough to be dear to average readers.

THE CHILD IN AMERICA *by William I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas* (KNOPF; $5.00)

DR. W. I. THOMAS and Dr. Dorothy Thomas have turned out a book which is perhaps the most complete of its kind. It is a study of many varieties of behavior disorders in children and of the experimental methods being developed throughout the United States and Canada in an attempt to correct these disorders. The authors have brought together in one volume the different approaches to the handling of behavior problems by the physiologist, the psychologist, the psychiatrist and the sociologist. They have been generous in their inclusion of case material, especially in illustrating the types of maladjustment in children, the operation of psychiatric clinics, the newer attempts to develop and analyze children's personalities through controlled social situations. The chapters on the treatment of juvenile delinquency and on parent education are especially interesting and stimulating; the account of what our schools are doing in the promotion of character building is most enlightening. Everyone who deals with children should know what is being done to promote an understanding of the child's attempt to adjust himself to an adult world. Such knowledge and understanding, whether sought by parent, teacher, social worker or clinician, will be enriched by a reading of *The Child in America.*

PHILOSOPHY TODAY *collected and edited by Edward LeRoy Schaub* (OPEN COURT; $3.75)

THIS book has six divisions: Contemporary Philosophy in English, French, German, Russian and Scandinavian countries, and Contemporary Philosophic Tendencies in South America with

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special reference to Argentina. It is surprising how significant such a division in philosophy along national lines really is. The contributors are some of the leading philosophical authorities in the various countries. "English speaking" philosophy is discussed by Professors Hoernlé, the idealist, Sellers, the realist, Otto, the pragmatist, and Wilbur Urban, one of the leading authorities on the theory of value. Other essays on logical, ethical, religious and esthetic theory, and a long objective essay on the history of Anglo-American philosophy complete this division. Though Prof. Hoernlé's discussion of idealism seems to us by far the most brilliant contribution, there can be little doubt that the Anglo-American contemporary philosophical approach is distinctly realistic. Among the contributors on French philosophy are Professors Parodi on the general trend of contemporary French thought, Lalande, Leroux on Logic, Piaget on Psychology, and Osty on Metaphysics. In contemporary German philosophy the idealistic tradition is still of outstanding weight, yet in it is discernible a drift towards a logical realism, especially in Prof. Linke's essay on Logic and Epistemology, Prof. Grelling's philosophy on the Exact Sciences, Prof. Driesch's philosophy of Nature, and Prof. Wenzl's essay on Psychology. But probably the most illuminating, and certainly one of the most brilliant, essays in the entire collection, is Dr. Frank's article on contemporary Russian philosophy.

DIFFICULTIES IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT *by Mary Chadwick* (JOHN DAY; $3:50)

IN THE emotional disturbances of childhood, the psycho-analytic approach discovers the roots of adult instability. The present volume emphasizes the close connection between the child's psychic problems and those of his parents and nurses, for "the happy-go-lucky person, the jealous, the sentimental, as well as the over-conscientious parent and the stern disciplinarian all produce a counter-reaction in children". The problems of adolescence are briefly summarized in a single short chapter—wisely, as having to do with a distinct field. The book has a good bibliography.

Anthropology

ANTHROPOLOGY AND MODERN LIFE *by Franz Boas* (NORTON; $3.00)

IN THIS volume, comparatively free from professorial treatment, Dr. Boas indicates the sweeping domain of anthropology by a wide wave of his hand. It is a study of man, not as physiology, anatomy or psychology studies him (for they are interested in the typical individual) but in a way such as sociology studies man. Anthropology is interested in the individual as a member of a group. It is interested not only in how the group molds the individual, biologically and socially, but, also, how any one individual differs from the others in his group. Whereas sociology confines itself largely to the present, anthropology includes the past with the present.

The book is a series of essays (or perhaps lectures?) rather than a unit treatment, touching upon the interrelations of race, nationalism, criminology, eugenics and education. At times it seems that Dr. Boas has discarded the tools of the anthropologist and has donned the mantle of the philosopher. His philosophical observations are rather stimulating; they do not demand the reader's concurrence, but they cause him to think. Dr. Boas does not think nationalism desirable for the ultimate good of mankind. He does not believe that there is an absolutely "pure" racial strain anywhere on this earth; hence, claims of racial superiority are invalid. In his discussion of education, he presents a thought which psychologists may well consider in measuring intelligence: namely, that a group of boys of any age is physiologically more mature than the corresponding age group of girls and that, perhaps, these same age groups ought not to be compared with each other. In conclusion, Dr. Boas holds that his science cannot predict the future, but can help to guide mankind through it.

PAGANISM IN ROUMANIAN FOLKLORE *by Marcu Beza* (DUTTON; $2.50)

M. BEZA is Roumanian Consul-General in London and a lecturer at Kings College, London

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University. His volume is slim; its contents, however sketchy they may be, are authentic. They comprise a number of religious customs, local superstitions, folk-ballads and mummer-plays, peculiar to the Roumanian peasant. In presenting them, M. Beza has attempted to point out similarities between such things as Roumanian festivals at various times of the year and Roman holidays at the same times; between Roumanian superstitions about the powers of the new moon and ancient Greek practices relating to the moon's waxing; between the wording of some folk tunes found in the Roumanian hinterland and that of old Roman and of old English ballads. The connection between the Roumanian folkway and its alleged pagan source is not always clear from the author's presentation. This may be due because of the omission on the author's part of material involved in his reasoning; it may be due, in part, to the sketchiness in presentation of both ancient and modern folklore. The reader who understands Roumanian or Greek will find several bits of verse and dialogue in these languages for his delectation.

Miscellaneous

AMERICAN PRESS OPINION: WASHINGTON TO COOLIDGE *edited by Allen Nevins* (HEATH; $5.00)

FROM obscure country newspapers as well as the metropolitan journals, Mr. Nevins has got together some several hundred editorials that are of absorbing interest, not only as a history of American journalism over a period of one hundred and fifty years, but as a continuous commentary of intelligent observers on the intricate development of America, its national and international issues, its internal affairs, its dwarfs and its giants. Here are editorials that decided controversies and matters of state, that started national scandals and that created enviable reputations; here is the work of obscure country editors as well as that of Alexander Hamilton, Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana, Pulitzer, William Cullen Bryant, Frank I. Cobb and William Allen White. As a source book for students of both American opinion and American journalism, it should prove of enduring value.

THE BOOK OF EARTHS *by Edna Kenton* (MORROW; $6.00)

MISS KENTON'S compilation of representations of the earth and its structural relation to the universe, rescued from obscure volumes, is a profoundly moving document of man's continuous effort to comprehend the nature of his world, the nature of himself, the nature and the design of his creation. Forty-eight half-tone plates and one hundred textual figures record all those changing shapes and patterns man has ascribed to his universe. The accompanying text gives their history and whatever explanation is necessary in an admirably lucid and simple manner.

A TREASURY OF ENGLISH APHORISMS *by Logan Pearsall Smith* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN; $2.00)

IN HIS simple and characteristically lucid introduction to the present volume, Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith defines three kinds of aphorisms: the commonplace, "new-minted and given a fresh lustre" by phrasing and imagery; the statement of an experience not uncommon, but never before embodied in words; and, finally, the "new intuition . . . coined from a vein of gold far below the surface of the familiar world". English literature contains abundant examples of all three types of aphorisms and Mr. Smith has very skillfully and very delightfully surveyed the field from Bacon to Hazlitt in his introduction. The aphorisms themselves are listed according to subject and range from aphorisms on the aphorism to those on the passions, prudence and politics.

SPORTS. HEROICS AND HYSTERICS *by John R. Tunis* (JOHN DAY; $2.50)

IS TENNIS, football, golf or any other sport a game, a business, a species of dirty politics, a heroic profession or a hysteric myth? The answer is that each sport is all of these things in varying mixture, and Mr. Tunis, who has followed all sports for some twenty years, attacks and bursts the great "sports myth".

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TO THE PURE *by Morris L. Ernst and William Seagle* (VIKING; $3.00)

THIS is a witty and well documented book on a most important subject. "To the pure all things are pure," St. Paul said, but to the public authorities of English-speaking countries a lot of things are not. Mr. Ernst and Mr. Seagle include a history of censorship from the earliest times, and exhibit in the crispest words the inconsistencies it has involved. At present Ireland is leading in the Prudery Stakes, with Canada a good second, while England and the United States tie for the third place. The authors suggest that the only law on the subject should be one prohibiting the sale or exhibition to any person under eighteen of matter *visually* representing the sexual act. This will no doubt seem inadequate except to the few old-fashioned folk left who regard individual liberty as more important than religion, patriotism, or even prosperity. But the book is so honest, so logically reasoned, so sensible and so enjoyable, that it might appeal to the shade of Mr. Comstock himself, if he has learned anything in Heaven. The prudery campaigners were already ridiculous. This book should help to make them negligible. But only a long psychoanalysis could possibly cleanse the Augean stables of what they call their minds.

Fiction

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY *by Clive Arden* (BOBBS-MERRILL; $2.00)

THIS is the old tale of the cynical young roué who wasn't a roué but a philanthropist, hiding his good deeds. The story might almost be taken for a satire. For the cynical Theo literally "kept" a couple of hundred women, far exceeding the number of which he was suspected by the virtuous girl who loved and disapproved of him. But he kept them on a farm in the country, where they were fed pure milk and fresh eggs, and were lectured wholesomely about the "cup of life". This hobby led to all sorts of complications.

THE BURNING RING *by Kay Burdekin* (MORROW; $2.50)

THIS fantastic tale, the writing of which is often charming, if not distinguished, is far removed from the main stream of the contemporary novel. It is surprising to find, in this day of realism, so frankly and engagingly romantic a tale. Mr. Carling, a sculptor, mysteriously comes into possession of a wishing ring (and this in 1929!) which enables him to shuttle back and forth in time. By its aid he is able to re-live, in England, the period of the Roman conquest, the time of Charles and the time of Elizabeth and, through his experiences in these periods, to discover "the wine and salt of life: first through a hero; then through a friend; lastly, through a woman". All in all, it is the sort of novel one hopes will find a wide audience among those with a taste for romantic fantasy.

JOHN FRENSHAM, K. C. *by Sinclair Murray* (DUTTON; $2.00)

HERE is the old story of the man—this time a brilliant English barrister who, ironically enough, has built up his reputation on divorces and ruined homes—who weighs the woman he loves against his wife and son, figures up the cost and makes his decision, after causing every one concerned a great deal of pain and suffering. Hackneyed as the plot is, Mr. Murray has made his characters so natural and sincere that one feels the keenest interest in the solution of their problem.

A STUDY IN BRONZE *by Esther Hyman* (HOLTS; $2.50)

THIS book has sincerity and pathos. Lucea, the beautiful daughter of an English gentleman and a Jamaican Negress, leaves her West Indian home for London, at the death of her father, hoping to overcome the prejudice against her mixed racial inheritance. Her life in England's Bohemia is depicted with a depth of feeling which leaves one with a greater understanding of the tragedies attendant upon miscegenation.

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AMAZON OF THE DESERT *by P. N. Krassnoff* (DUFFIELD; $2.50)

FORSAKING his hobby—political novels—the author tells the story of a Cossack officer, at an outpost in Central Asia, and of his niece, a young girl who prefers the adventures of frontier life to a drawing-room. A man who has travelled extensively, Krassnoff has painted the mountain scenery of Central Asia with such vivid reality that his descriptions are far more interesting than the romance between Pavlovitch and Fedossia.

THE HOUSE OF THE THREE GANDERS *by Irving Bacheller* (BOBBS-MERRILL; $2.00)

BUILT around a famous trial in New York State and the part a young boy played in bringing the real criminal to justice, this book combines fact and fiction. It is the life of Shad Morryson from the time he is found on the bank of the Oswegatchie until he marries the daughter of the man who befriended him. The book is written with a naïveté which makes it almost a juvenile, but underlying it all is the portrayal of a warm friendship and sense of loyalty. Mr. Bacheller's accurate descriptions of the Adirondack region come from his wide knowledge of this country and the life and manners of its inhabitants.

ANOTHER COUNTRY *by H. Du Coudray* (SEARS; $2.50)

THE author of this semi-tragic story is a young girl of eighteen, a student of Lady Margaret Hall College, Oxford University. She writes of a married Englishman, second officer on a British merchant line, who lays over in Malta on sick-leave, and becomes interested in a Russian refugee. Her characterizations of this man, who becomes a bigamist in his attempt to find real happiness, and of the Russian girl placed in his safekeeping are sophisticated and mature. Miss Du Coudray's work has merited the Oxford and Cambridge prize.

Detective Fiction

HOUSE OF THE TWO GREEN EYES *by Stephen Chalmers* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN; $2.00)

THIS is a clever, swift mystery story of a New York newspaper reporter and his adventures in the Tenderloin district among all manner of criminals. An old lady dies in Washington Square, leaving a million dollars. What happens thereafter is remarkably well told.

THE MURDERS IN SURREY WOOD *by John Arnold* (DUTTON; $2.00)

PITCH-BLACK darkness in Surrey Wood; the professor's bicycle lamp has gone out for the fourth time. Hearing a groan, he rushes into the underbrush and falls over a body. How this is connected up with the Marquis, master of Henshall Manor House, and a robbery at the Anglo-Belgian Bank form an exciting tale full of action.

ENTER SIR JOHN *by Clemence Dane and Helen Simpson* (COSMOPOLITAN: $2.00)

WHEREIN the husband of a stock company actress becomes annoyed at one of his wife's caprices and murder casts suspicion on the entire troupe. Sir John Saumarez, actor, producer and distinguished crime detector, solves the riddle and bags a reward.

THE HOUSE IN TUESDAY MARKET *by J. S. Fletcher* (KNOPF; $2.00)

MR. GAISFORD, having recently purchased a house in Tuesday Market, becomes mystified over a peculiar phenomenon that occurs when he approaches a window-seat in his study, and upon investigation discovers therein the embalmed body of a man. Justice is only partly satisfied.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE XXX)

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THE BOOK MART

HARDLY anything has been talked about in book collecting circles for the last month except the sale at the Anderson Galleries of the library of Jerome Kern. At this sale higher prices were paid for rare books and manuscripts than ever before in the history of book auctions. For some books the prices paid were ten times what they had ever realized before. While everybody expected that this would be a record-breaking sale, not even Mr. Kennerley or Mr. Kern could foresee what actually happened. The Kern sale marks the end of an era in book collecting and the beginning of another.

The Kern collection has long been known as one of the finest lots of association books and manuscripts ever brought together by a private collector. The decision to sell it was reached at a time of unexampled national prosperity when many of the buyers of books had made so much money that they were looking about for a means of spending it. The cataloguing and the conduct of the auction sales themselves were as nearly perfect as could be. Within recent years there have been no great sales of books of this character. The Kern library included the gems of Georgian and Victorian literature, and many of the "moderns". It was not especially rich in Elizabethan and Shakespearean literature, although these were represented and shared in the increase of values which marked everything else. The scarcity of such books at sales, with the increased number of collectors, brought about that economic situation which governs prices—lessened supply and increased demand. Thus, all the conditions for a successful sale were met at the outset.

It is significant, when the sales were all over and the totals were approaching the two-million dollar mark, that dealers, who had been selling copies of *The Scarlet Letter* for prices from $100 to $200 each, did not regard the price of $1,125 paid for the Kern copy as an exorbitant price. Lathrop C. Harper, one of the cleverest of New York dealers, who specializes in early printing and, therefore, had an impartial view of the Kern sale, expressed the opinion that up to this time the prices of rare books have been too low. He argues that, though rare books, from the collector's standpoint, are essentially articles of luxury, their prices have not increased commensurably with those of other articles of luxury. A collector may live without having a copy of the first edition of Fielding's *Tom Jones*—especially when a copy brings $29,000—but there are many who now would gladly pay $3,500 for it, as did Mr. Kern. What was a low price yesterday was a high price the day before, and a higher price the day before that.

This beginning of a new era in book collecting necessitates readjustments in many directions. It is not likely that the dealers will all go over their shelves and mark up their prices on the basis of those obtained at the Kern sale. Some may do so, but it shall not profit them. Possibly some collectors will become discouraged at the high prices and drop out of the competition. Nevertheless, while the Kern sale included the most notable works in Georgian and Victorian literature, there are thousands of other books which will be highly valued by collectors and which have not yet reached the prohibitive stage of prices. So long as prosperity continues, books may be expected to increase in demand and price. Should a period of depression come, it would not mean a return to the old standards of value. The collectors would not all rush to dump their books on the market; they would simply refrain from buying more books until an-

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other cycle of prosperity brought about the competition of the auction room and still higher prices.

There are thousands of collectors of limited means to whom the high prices of the Kern sale mean nothing personally. They do not aspire to the ownership of a first edition of *Tom Jones,* a "perfect *Pickwick* in parts", a *Robinson Crusoe,* in the first states of the three volumes, or a Gray's *Elegy* in uncut and unopened condition. There are many fine libraries in this country which do not contain a First Folio or a Gutenberg Bible. These were lacking in the Kern library, but their absence did not affect the value of the other "items" which were there. It is not unlikely that the new adjustment in values of rare books will cause some collectors to change their "lines" and to do less in the field of general competition, where they have been factors. But a new generation of book collectors is growing up—very rapidly, too—and these younger entrants into the competitive field will not be hampered by thoughts of the good old days when a hundred dollars would buy a nice copy of *The Scarlet Letter.*

Many of those who are unfamiliar with the ways of the auction room have referred to the Kern sale as "mad speculation", and there were some prices paid in the sale which would seem to warrant this designation. But it would surprise many to know how largely the books purchased by dealers at high prices were bought upon orders from their customers. In one case an item which previously had a record price of $550 brought $2,250, and the purchaser had an order to buy it under $3,000. While the successful bidders were all dealers, with three or four notable exceptions, they represented a very large number of private collectors and, ex-

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LIBRARY

THE BOOK MART

cept in very few instances, it is not likely that many of these highest priced books will be found in dealers' stocks a year hence.

Through the prompt action of Assistant Librarian, George Parker Winship of Harvard, and Howard Corning of the Harvard School of Business Administration, the splendid Defoe collection of Professor W. P. Trent of Columbia is now the property of the Boston Public Library. After Professor Trent had become physically incapacitated by a shock just before Christmas, he decided to sell his Defoe collection of some 30,000 books and pamphlets. Harvard wanted it, but did not have the money to buy it. So the two Harvard men named appealed to the trustees of the Boston Public Library, which had available funds, and the trustees voted for the purchase at a special meeting. In the meantime the Universities of Michigan, Chicago and Texas had become interested. After the trustees' meeting, Mr. Corning, Mr. Winship and Director Belden of the Boston Public Library went to New York and within twenty-four hours were back in Boston with the deal for purchase closed. Owing to the close relations between the Boston Public Library and Harvard University, this collection will now be available to the student from Cambridge or Boston. Its great importance lies in the fact that Defoe was for forty years the most prominent journalist in Europe—often engaged in the British secret service—and this material, on which the unpublished three-volume life of Defoe by Professor Trent has been based, covers the political history of England and Europe during an especially interesting period. The Life of Defoe probably will be completed by Professor Henry Hutchins of the University of Michigan.

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE XXVI)

MURDER AT SEA *by Richard Connell* (MINTON, BALCH; $2.00)

WEALTHY Samuel Cleghorn is murdered in his stateroom on the S. S. Pendragon and Andrew Kelton, crime expert, bound on a pleasure cruise, finds himself bewildered, because several passengers admit the killing. He solves a double mystery and catches the author of the crime.

UNDERGROUND *by J. Jefferson Farjeon* (DIAL PRESS; $2.00)

As THE title signifies, this weird tale concerns itself with hidden subterranean chambers in a "haunted house" on the coast of England. A group of adventurous people seek the mystery of Coomber House. Eventually the secret is discovered and those who are left alive live happily ever after. The action is swift in this typical well-done Farjeon mystery story.

THE COBRA CANDLESTICK *by Elsa Barker* (SEARS; $2.00)

DEAD men tell no tales, and so John Marshbitter, having inadvertently found a strange letter that presaged evil, is murdered, leaving his entire family under an apparently impenetrable cloud of suspicion. Dexter Drake, master detective, solves the secret.

MURDER AT THE KEYHOLE *by R. A. J. Walling* (MORROW; $2.00)

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